

**THE CHRISTOLOGY OF HEBREWS
IN RELATION TO JEWISH LITERATURE**

by

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DECLARATION

**I declare that this thesis is my own work; it has not
been submitted for any other degree, and it
constitutes the results of my research.**

JOHN C. HENDERSON

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I dedicate this Thesis to my mother

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*for all she has been to, and done for, me;
she will not be forgotten.*

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The central issue of the thesis concerns the basic christological problem in the Epistle to the Hebrews, namely, the relation between the pre-existent language and the appointment language as they are applied to the Son. The Epistle is distinctive because it contains one of the highest (if not the highest) and one of the lowest (if not the lowest) christologies in the NT. On the one hand, the author speaks of the Son's humanity in some of the most graphic terms in the NT, while on the other hand, he also speaks implicitly and explicitly of the Son as being equal with God, thus reflecting, at least, a binitarian view of the Godhead. The Son is pictured as being not only appointed Son, but also as the pre-existent Son. The questions I address are: (a) *Was the Son always Son or did he become Son?* (b) *If he was always Son, how could he be appointed Son?*

I review critically the various solutions offered to explain this apparent dichotomy, such as the adoptionist, kenotic, contradictionist, Arian and orthodox solutions. The orthodox solution seems to stand closest to the christology of Hebrews. The purpose is to present that solution in a revised, clearer and a more convincing manner.

A secondary objective is to affirm the Jewishness of this Epistle to the Hebrews, its author and its addressees. This is achieved, on the one hand, by demonstrating that the letter is much more a pastoral and theological letter than a polemical treatise against Judaism, and on the other hand, by highlighting how Jewish the methodology, the ^{christology} phraseology, the titles, the ideas and concepts are which the author employs. The Jewishness of the Epistle makes the central issue of this thesis, namely, the divinity of the Son, more difficult for modern scholarship. If it was a Hellenistic piece of literature, then there would be no problem with it calling a second person 'God' because of Greek polytheism. But that a Jewish literary work should do so is seen as contradicting Jewish monotheism. It is my purpose to show that first century Judaism, despite its later 'two powers in heaven' heresy polemic, had the foundations for a binitarian view of God.

CONTENTS

Title
Declaration
Acknowledgements
Dedication
Abstract

Abbreviations		i
Bibliography		vii
Introduction		xxxvii
Chapter One	The Messianic Son (Heb. 1:1-2a)	1
Chapter Two	The Appointed and Exalted Son (Heb. 1:2b)	47
Chapter Three	The Son Appointed High Priest (Heb. 5:5-10)	65
Chapter Four	The Eternal Son (Heb. 1:3a)	106
Chapter Five	The Son called God (Heb. 1:8-9)	138
Chapter Six	The Son of Man (Heb. 2:5-9)	147
Chapter Seven	The Incarnate Son (Heb. 2:16)	160
Conclusion		170
Appendix	Jewish Monotheism and Christology	179

ABBREVIATIONS

General

Adv. Prax.	Tertullian's <i>Adversus Praxeam</i>
AD	anno Domini - in the year of our Lord
Ant.	Jewish Antiquities
ANCL	<i>Ante-Nicene Christian Library</i>
ANE	Ancient Near East
Ascen.	Ascension
ASV	American Standard Version
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
AV	Authorised Version
B.	Babylonian (Talmud)
Bauer	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (2nd. edit. 1958), an augmented edition of Walter Bauer ^{ed.}
BCE	Before the Common Era
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver, C.A. Briggs: A translation and adaptation of the fourth revised <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BS	Bibliotheca Sacra
BT	The Bible Translator
c.	around, or about
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CCL	Corpus Christianorum Latinorum
CQR	Catholic Quarterly Review
CUP	Cambridge University Press
d.	died
DCH	<i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> (vol. 1) Ed. D. J. A. Clines Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1993
<i>et passim</i>	and throughout
EJ	Encyclopedia Judaica
EQ	Evangelical Quarterly
ET	Expository Times
Ev. Th.	Evangelische Theologie
Frg.	Fragment (Targum)
Goodspeed	<i>The New Testament: An American Translation</i> by Edgar J. Goodspeed (1923)
HJP	<i>The History of the Jewish People</i> <i>in the age of Jesus Christ</i> by Emil Schürer (3 Vols.) eds. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, & Matthew Black T & T Clark Ltd, Edinburgh 1973
Hom.	Homily
HR	History of Religions

General [cont'd]

HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
HUP	Harvard University Press
IBS	Irish Biblical Studies
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
Int.	Interpretation
IVP	Inter-Varsity Press
J.	Jerusalem (Targum)
JB	The Jerusalem Bible
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
Jer.	Jeremiah
JE	Jewish Encyclopedia
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
Jon.	Jonathan ben Uzziel (Targum)
Jos.	Josephus
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
Liddell and Scott	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott (7th. edition 1889)
LQHR	The London Quarterly and Holborn Review
LXX	The Septuagint
M.	Mishnah
Mek.	Mekilta
Mid.	Midrash (Psalms, Proverbs)
MT	Massoretic Text
MUP	Manchester University Press
NBD	New Bible Dictionary
NDT	New Dictionary of Theology
NEB	New English Bible
NFCE	The National Foundation for Christian Education
NHLE	<i>The Nag Hammadi Library in English</i>
NIV	New International Version
Nov. T.	Novum Testamentum
NT	The New Testament
NTS	New Testament Studies
NTTE	The New Testament in Today's English version (1966)
Onk.	Onkelos (Targum)
OP.	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> ed. B. P. Greenfell and A. Hunt
OT	The Old Testament
OUP	Oxford University Press
P. or Pal.	Palestinian (Targum, Talmud)
Pes. R.	Pesikta Rabbati
Pes. K.	Pesikta Kahana
PG	<i>Patrologia graeca</i> J. P. Migne, <i>Patrologiae cursus completus</i> series graeca (162 vols.), Migne, Paris 1857-66

General [cont'd]

Phillips	<i>The New Testament in Modern English</i> , trans. by J. B. Phillips (1958)
PL	<i>Patrologia latina</i> J. P. Migne, <i>Patrologiae cursus completus</i> series latina (217 vols.), Migne, Paris 1844-55
Ps.-Jon.	<i>Pseudo-Jonathan</i> (Targum)
PTR	<i>The Princeton Theological Review</i>
R.	Rabbah, e.g. Gen. R. = Genesis Rabbah
Rec.	<i>Recognitions in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library:</i> <i>Translations of The Writings of the Fathers</i> (vol. 3) <i>Tatian, Theophilus, and the Clementine Recognitions</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RTR	The Reformed Theological Review
RV	Revised Version (1881)
suppl.	supplement
S-B	<i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</i> <i>aus Talmud und Midrasch</i> by H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck (1922-1961)
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
Sib. Or.	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SOED	Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
T.	Testament (of The Twelve Patriarchs)
TB	Tyndale Bulletin
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> ed. G. Kittel Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. USA 1964
Tos.	Tosefta
Trg.	Targum
TS	Theological Studies
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
Vg.	The Vulgate (Latin) Version
VT	Vetus Testamentum
War	The Jewish War
Weymouth	<i>The New Testament in Modern Speech</i> , trans. by Richard Francis Weymouth (1902)
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YUP	Yale University Press
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZNTW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Alten Kirche

Philo

Abr.	<i>De Abrahamo</i>
Aet.	<i>De Aeternitate Mundi</i>
Agr.	<i>De Agricultura</i>

Philo [cont'd]

Cher.	<i>De Cherubim</i>
Conf.	<i>De Confusione Linguarum</i>
Congr.	<i>De Congressu Eruditionis gratia</i>
Decal.	<i>De Decalogo</i>
Det.	<i>Quod Deterius Potiori insidiari soleat</i>
Ebr.	<i>De Ebrietate</i>
Flacc.	<i>In Flaccum</i>
Fug.	<i>De Fuga et Inventionem</i>
Gig.	<i>De Gigantibus</i>
Hyp.	<i>Hypothetica</i>
Jos.	<i>De Josepho</i>
Leg. All. 1, 2, 3	<i>Legum Allegoriarum</i>
Leg. Gai.	<i>De Legatione ad Gaium</i>
Mig.	<i>De Migratione Abrahami</i>
Mos. 1, 2	<i>De Vita Mosis</i>
Mut.	<i>De Mutatione Nominum</i>
Op.	<i>De Opificio Mundi</i>
Plant.	<i>De Plantatione</i>
Post.	<i>De Posteritate Caini</i>
Praem.	<i>De Praemiis et Poenis</i>
Prov.	<i>De Providentia</i>
Qu. in Ex.	<i>Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum</i>
Qu. in Gen.	<i>Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin</i>
Quis Her.	<i>Quis rerum divinarum Heres sit</i>
Quod Dues	<i>Quod Dues sit Immutabilis</i>
Quod Omn. Pro.	<i>Quod Omnis Probus liber</i>
Sac.	<i>De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini</i>
Sob.	<i>De Sobrietate</i>
Som. 1, 2	<i>De Somniis</i>
Spec. Leg. 1, 2, 3, 4	<i>De Specialibus Legibus</i>
Virt.	<i>De Virtutibus</i>
Vit. Cont.	<i>De Vita Contemplativa</i>

Qumran

CD	Cairo Damascus Rule
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
Fr.	Fragment
H	<i>Hodayoth</i> = Hymns
M	<i>Milhamah</i> = War Rule
Melch	Melchizedek
p	peshar = sectarian Bible commentary
Ps ^a	Psalms Scroll a = 11QPs ^a
Q	Qumran cave (1Q, 2Q, etc. = Qumran cave 1, 2, etc.)
S	<i>Serekh</i> = Community Rule = 1QS
Sa	<i>Serekh</i> : Appendix a = Messianic Rule = 1QSa
Sb	<i>Serekh</i> : Appendix b = Blessings = 1QSB
TS	Temple Scroll = 11QTS

Tractates of the Mishnah, Tosefta and Talmuds

Aboth	Aboth
Arak.	Arakhin
ARN	Aboth de Rabbi Nathan
AZ	Abodah Zarah
BB	Baba Bathra
Bekh.	Bekhoroth
Ber.	Berakoth
Bet.	Betzah
Bik.	Bikkurim
BK	Baba Kamma
BM	Baba Metzia
Dem.	Demai
Eduy.	Eduyoth
Erub.	Erubim
Git.	Gittin
Hag.	Hagigah
Hall.	Hallah
Hor.	Horayoth
Hull.	Hullin
Kel.	Kelim
Ker.	Kerithoth
Ket.	Ketuboth
Kid.	Kiddushin
Kil.	Kilaim
Kin.	Kinnim
Maas.	Maaseroth
Mak.	Makkoth
Maks.	Makshirin
Meg.	Megillah
Mci.	Meilah
Men.	Menakhoth
Mid.	Middoth
Mik.	Mikwaoth
MK	Moed Katan
MS	Maaser Sheni
Naz.	Nazir
Ned.	Nedarim
Neg.	Negaim
Ohol.	Oholot
Orlah	Orlah
Par.	Parah
Pcah	Peah
Pes.	Pesahim
RH	Rosh Hashanah
Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Shab.	Shabbath
Sheb.	Shebiith
Shebuoth	Shebuoth
Shek.	Shekalim

Tractates of the Mishnah, Tosefta and Talmuds [cont'd]

Sot.	Sotah
Suk.	Sukkah
Taan.	Taanith
Tam.	Tamid
Tem.	Temurah
Ter.	Terumoth
Toh.	Tohoroth
TY	Tebul Yom
Ukt.	Uktzin
Yad.	Yadaim
Yeb.	Yebamoth
Yoma	Yoma
YT	Yom Tob
Zab.	Zabim
Zeb.	Zebahim

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INTRODUCTION

The Uniqueness of Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews has been described in modern times in such pejorative expressions as: 'artificial', 'outmoded', 'a theological treatise in cold blood', 'sheer length and nothing but length' (cf. Hurst, 1990, 1). For me, these negative descriptions could not be further from the truth; rather, the description of 'highly original' (cf. Anderson, 1992, 512), insofar as it applies to a distinctive presentation of the Gospel and not to the Gospel itself, is more apt.

I am more in accord with Omark's sentiments:

Of all the epistolary literature of the New Testament, there is no more intellectually intriguing and heart engaging letter than the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews. Its literary sophistication, its theological profundity, its solemn exhortation, and its emotional overtones must have challenged its original readers who were censured for being "dull of hearing."

(Omark, 39)

It has been claimed that the Epistle's cultic language, which features so prominently in it, 'makes it seem remote and alien to most lay people today' (cf. Anderson, 1992, 512; cf. Isaacs, 11). Moule, writing in 1958, said that Hebrews has 'acquired a reputation for being formidable' (Moule, 1958, 228), but apparently since 1980 it has become less so to scholars, at least, if the number of commentaries and monographs being produced is anything to go by.¹ In

¹ In contrast to less than 20 commentaries and less than 10 monographs written during the period 1960-79, the period 1980-93 produced 'some 40 commentaries and almost 40 monographs (not counting dissertations, introductions and books on themes related to Hebrews but not directly on Hebrews)' (McCullough, 1994, 66).

1994, McCullough writes:

Twenty years ago ministers could perhaps have been forgiven for neglecting Hebrews in the pulpit with the excuse that exegetical resources on Hebrews were few and far between; now, however, that excuse is no longer tenable'

(McCullough, 1994, 120)

Still, the Epistle is perhaps the most enigmatic text in the NT. Scott says:

The Epistle to the Hebrews is in many respects the riddle of the New Testament....the more it is studied in detail the more it abounds in problems - historical, doctrinal, exegetical - which seem to defy solution. Among early Christian writings it stands solitary and mysterious, "without father, without mother, without genealogy," like that Melchizedek on whom its argument turns.

(Scott, 1922, 1)

The letter's argumentation may be subtle, but its imagery is rich and evocative. The Epistle is 'a masterpiece of condensed reference' (Rendall, 214), and probably the most elegant and sophisticated text in the NT. From many points of view, it is one of the most remarkable and virile pieces of literature in the NT (cf. MacNeill, 10).

In many respects, the Epistle is ~~an~~ distinctive piece of literature: first, it has no epistolary greeting at the beginning¹ but it has an ending which if genuine would indicate that the work is a letter, though the general consensus seems to be that it is a 'gesandte Predigt' (McCullough, 1994, 114); secondly, there seems to be a general consensus among scholars that the Greek style of the author is the most accomplished in the NT; thirdly, if rhetoric can be defined as 'the art of persuasion', then Hebrews is a rhetorical work from start

¹ The Epistle of James has no ending.

to finish (cf. Lindars, 1991, 2); fourthly, the concept of a messianic priesthood after the manner of Melchizedek is unique in the NT; fifthly, the use of the Yom Kippur ritual to expound the sacrificial death of the Messiah goes beyond any previous expositions of the faith that 'Christ died for our sins' (1 Cor. 15:3). The author of Hebrews uniquely in the NT presents the Messiah in terms of the OT high priesthood and his work in terms of the Yom Kippur sacrifice; these he perceives as transitory types foreshadowing the person and work of Jesus.

The Jewishness of the Epistle

The Author

The letter contains many issues that have been the focus of considerable controversy over the years and it 'continues to be a storm-center of debate in NT study' (Hurst, 1990, 2). Not least among the controversies have been those that concern the Epistle's author, addressees, the date and the circumstances of its composition which have all been the subjects of much speculation. Concerning its author, Origen's famous remark, τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολήν, τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς θεὸς οἶδεν still holds (Eusebius, 6.25.14; cf. Attridge, 1 n.6), but the possible background influences (e.g. Philo, Qumran, apocalyptic and rabbinical Judaism, gnosticism, Middle Platonism) on the author continue to be debated (cf. Parsons, 196ff.; Hurst, 1990; McCullough, 1994, 69ff.). Generally speaking the attempt by Käsemann, Grässer and Theissen to posit a backdrop of gnostic presuppositions to Hebrews has not

succeeded; it sits very uneasily with the Epistle's unmistakable eschatology and the theme that, while Christians are pilgrims in this world and can grasp something of what is in store for them now by faith, the Sabbath rest of God's people is still to be realised in the world to come (cf. Heb. 4:9ff.; 10:35ff.; 12:1ff.; McCullough, 1994, 76; Hurst, 1990, 71; Hofius, 1970, 74; Barrett, 1956, 366ff., 373ff.). Whether the author has been influenced by Platonism, either directly or indirectly via Philo, is a complicated issue. Taylor claims that the author's 'aim is to present the new faith in terms which have been suggested by the Platonic philosophy....he is certainly influenced by the Platonic principle of the antithesis between the heavenly Idea, which is real, and the earthly Copy, which is transient and temporal' (Taylor, 1940, 1945, 1958, 102). Moffatt says of the author of Hebrews, 'The philosophical element in his view of the world and God is fundamentally Platonic' but reckons that his 'primitive eschatology...is hardly consonant with his deeper thought' (Moffatt, xxxi, xxxiv; cf. Scott, 1922, 115f.). Barrett stressed the central role of eschatology in the Epistle and concluded that many features of the author's thinking which have been thought to have been derived from Platonism were in fact derived from currents within Jewish apocalyptic (cf. Barrett, 1956, 385ff.). He claims that 'The heavenly tabernacle in Hebrews is not the product of Platonic idealism, but the eschatological temple of apocalyptic Judaism' (ibid. 389; cf. Hofius, 1970, 92; B. Sanh. 99b). However, Barrett also says of the author of Hebrews that 'He had seized upon the idealist element in apocalyptic, and he developed it in terms that Plato...could have understood' (ibid. 393). Williamson concludes

that 'Whatever else is uncertain it is certain that the Author of Hebrews did not borrow anything, ideas or terminology, *directly* from Plato's own writings' (Williamson, 1963, 424). He believes that Barrett has gone 'too far when he is prepared to admit that the author of Hebrews "may well have read Plato and other philosophers"' (ibid. n.1). Williamson reckons:

A superficial reading of Plato's dialogues has led to inexact interpretations of his thought along far too deeply Christian lines. This, in consequence, has led to the discovery of Platonism in Hebrews where in fact it is not present....

But earth and heaven in Christian theology are not related to one another as Ideal to Copy in the way in which Plato would have understood such a relationship, but as areas of reality between which there is a two-way traffic. He who has entered the 'true tent' in heaven was He who 'at the end of these days' became a real man on earth and who will one day return to be greeted by those who are eagerly awaiting him.

(ibid. 423)

Failure to understand how integral, how deep, eschatology was to the author's thinking and theology probably accounts for a number of passages in the Epistle (e.g. 8:1, 5; 9:11, 23f.; 10:1; 11:1, 3) being interpreted in Platonic terms (cf. Williamson, 1963, 422). Moreover, Hurst like Horbury, finds many Jewish parallels for both the vertical (cosmological) and horizontal ('then - now', 'apocalyptic linear' eschatological) frameworks of Hebrews (cf. Hurst, 1990, 30-33, 37-42) and concludes, with good reason, that the author 'developed certain OT ideas within the Jewish apocalyptic framework' (ibid. 42; Horbury, 1983, 47). I think that whatever packaging the author of Hebrews may have employed to communicate his theology, Barrett, Williamson, Hofius and Hurst have trenchantly questioned the view that the author allowed a Platonic-type dualism to dominate any of his ideas, with their emphasis on the

Epistle's eschatology, its established role of history and time and the Jewishness of both its vertical and horizontal frameworks, (cf. Williamson, 1963, 421; Hurst, 1990, 11, 41).

On the other hand, while I believe that there has been a strong Jewish apocalyptic and Pharisaic/rabbinic influence on the author of Hebrews, I am not so sure that the Jewish background of the author can be narrowed down to one particular variety of Judaism such as Qumran, the Wisdom School, Philonic/Hellenistic, Jewish apocalyptic or Pharisaic/rabbinic. There was considerable theological common ground permeating each of these varieties which probably formed what Horbury calls the 'catholicity in Judaism of the theocratic view' (Horbury, 1983, 48). This may account for many scholars perceiving different forms of Judaism as forming the background to Hebrews. Barrett (cf. Barrett, 1956, 385ff.), Michel, (cf. Michel, 62-65, 121) and Hurst (cf. Hurst, 1990, 42) identified a Jewish apocalyptic influence; Hofius saw parallels with 4 Ezra (cf. Hofius, 1970, 92); Yadin thought that the Epistle was directed against the Qumran sect doctrines (Yadin, 1958, 36ff.); Kosmala saw the Epistle addressed to Essenes not yet become Christians (Kosmala, vii-xi); Sandegren viewed it as addressed to former Jewish priests (cf. Sandegren, 223); Spicq,¹ Dey (cf. Dey, 151f., 179ff., 209ff.) and Thompson (Thompson, 1982, 7ff.), among others, argued for a Philonic influence; Schenke² proposed an

¹ C. Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 2 vols. (J. Gabalda, Paris, 1952) pp. 88f. and his 1977 updated and shortened commentary, p. 15 (cf. McCullough, 1980, 143, 156 n.20).

² H. M. Schenke, 'Erwägungen zum Rätsel des Hebräerbriefes' in *Neues Testament*

early form of Jewish *Merkabah* mysticism as the Epistle's background. Horbury is probably going along the right lines when he suggests 'that the antecedents of the priestly thought characteristic of Hebrews should be sought neither in Christianity, nor in sectarian or visionary Judaism, but in the pervasive influence upon Jewry of the Pentateuchal theocracy' (Horbury, 1983, 68). Chester agrees with Horbury's argument 'for the main determinative influence upon the writer of Hebrews to be the hierocratic-theocratic outlook widespread within first-century Judaism' (Chester, 58; cf. *ibid.* 49). What does seem clear in the Epistle is the author's Jewishness and it is my intention to focus more on that fact rather than try to narrow down his religious background to one Jewish sect or group or to place him in the diaspora or Palestine, though I favour the latter.¹ Interestingly, though Pokorný thinks that the author was probably a Gentile Christian (cf. Pokorný, 188 n.38), many scholars (especially in recent years) who have advocated a Hellenistic milieu of the author have also defended his Jewishness (cf. McCullough, 1994, 76).

The author of Hebrews may have written in excellent Greek and employed philosophical packaging for his ideas but the fundamental strain of his thought is Hebraic (cf. Scott, 1922, 19). Perhaps more than any other NT writing, Hebrews is steeped in the OT but the author's use of it and his method

und christliches Existenz, Tübingen, 1973, eds. H. D. Betz & L. Schottroff, pp. 421-437, esp. 433f. (cf. Williamson, 1976, 233).

¹ Horbury believes 'that the thought of the epistle concerning priests would accord with the Palestinian origin shortly before the First Revolt proposed by Nairne and by Moule' (Horbury, 1983, 68).

of argument appears to owe much to the influence of Jewish teachers (rabbis) as reflected in Jewish literature (cf. Ellingworth & Nida, 1). There are signs that he stood within the Jewish midrashic tradition of interpreting the Scriptures. Kistemaker claims that the author of Hebrews has adopted the Midrash *peshet*¹ peculiar to the DSS's commentary on Habakkuk (1QpHab) and finds features of the *peshet* in the author's treatment of Pss. 8:4-6 (cf. Heb. 2:5-9), 95:7-11 (cf. Heb. 3:7-19), 110:4 (cf. Heb. 5:6ff., 6:19-7:28), 40:6-8 (cf. Heb. 10:5-10) (cf. Kistemaker, 1961, 11f.; Lane, 1991, 43; Hamerton-Kelly, 1973, 244; Héring, 98). Buchanan goes so far as to say that the Epistle 'is a homiletical midrash based on Ps. 110' and that 'The midrashic method of exegesis, employed by the author of Hebrews, was basic to the Samaritan, Jewish, and Christian understanding of the role of scripture in religious life' (Buchanan, 1972, XIX). Scott writes, 'The method of exegesis employed in Hebrews is not the allegorical method of Philo, but is more nearly akin to that of the Rabbinical Schools' (Scott, 1922, 53). Fitzmyer believes that 'Heb. 7 is an excellent example of a midrash on Gn 14, 18-20' (Fitzmyer, 1963, 305). He refers to five characteristics of a midrash, pointed out by R. Bloch,² in this section:

...its point de départ in an OT passage (Gn 14, 18-20 implicitly quoted), its

¹ The word 'midrash' comes from the Hebrew root מִדְּרָשׁ, which means to 'examine' 'question' or 'search'. A person preparing a midrash was one who searched the text of scripture to find its true meaning which he then expounded. A closely related word is 'peshet' (פֶּשֶׁט) which means 'interpretation' or 'explanation' and refers to a distinctive type of midrash (cf. Buchanan, XX).

² R. Bloch, 'Midrash' VDBS 5, pp. 1265-7 (cf. Fitzmyer, 1963, 305).

homiletic character (here for apologetic purposes), its attentive analysis of the text (the interpretation of the names and explanation of the blessing and tithes), its adaptation of the OT text to a present situation (the priesthood of Christ), and its haggadic character (an elaborative exposé in which the interest is centered on the biblical account rather than on the historical figure as such). Even in its outward form this section bears resemblance to a classic midrash in Genesis ^{RABBAH} ~~Rabbah~~ 43,6.

Rabbah

(ibid.)

The author's hermeneutical technique, his interpretation, his concepts, and his terminology are thoroughly Jewish. For example, the idea that God swears an oath in order to ^{strengthen} ~~strengthen~~ faith is exceedingly Jewish:

'Lo, I raise my hand to heaven' [Dt. 32:40]:

When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, he created it only by an act of speech,
and he created it only by taking an oath [as in the base-verse God raises his hand to heaven and takes an oath].

What is it that caused him to take an oath?

It was those of little faith who caused him to take an oath,
as it is said, Therefore He swore concerning them that He would overthrow them in the wilderness (Ps. 106:26).

(Sifre Dt. 330:1; cf. B. Sot. 48b; Taan. 8a; Heb. 6:13-18)

The author's messianic interpretation of Ps. 95:7 also finds an echo in rabbinic literature:

R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: 'Have I a portion in the world to come?' He replied, 'If this Master desires it.'¹ R. Joshua b. Levi said, 'I saw two, but heard only the voice of a third.'² He then asked him, 'When will the Messiah come?' - 'Go and ask him himself,' was his reply. 'Where is he sitting?' - 'At the entrance.' 'And by what sign may I recognise him?' - 'He is sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them]³ all at once, and rebandage them together, whereas he unties and rebandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking should I be wanted, [it

¹ This is the *Shekinah* according to Rashi (cf. B. Sanh. 98a n. c5).

² I.e. he saw only himself and Elijah there, but heard a third voice - that of the *Shekinah* (B. Sanh. 98a n. c6).

³ The bandages of their sores for dressing (B. Sanh. 98a n. c8).

being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores].’ So he went to him and greeted him, saying, ‘Peace upon thee, Master and Teacher.’ ‘Peace upon thee, O son of Levi,’ he replied. ‘When wilt thou come Master?’ asked he. ‘To-day’, was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, ‘What did he say to thee?’ - ‘Peace upon thee, O son of Levi,’ he answered. Thereupon he [Elijah] observed, ‘He thereby assured thee and thy father of [a portion in] the world to come.’ ‘He spoke falsely to me,’ he rejoined, ‘stating that he would come to-day, but has not.’ He [Elijah] answered him, ‘This is what he said to thee, To-day, if ye will hear his voice.’

(B. Sanh. 98a)

Bruce finds a ‘striking biblical parallel’ between Heb. 10:38f. and 1QpHab 2:3f. concerning deliverance by means of enduring faith (Bruce, 1962-63, 221).

The author of Hebrews employs the Jewish literary technique of argument, namely, *a minore ad maius* (*a fortiori*), which the rabbis described as *qal wā-hōmer* (‘light and heavy’) argument (cf. Heb. 2:2-4; 9:13-14; 10:28-29; 12:9, 25; Mek. Ex. 21:24 [Lauterbach, 3:67ff.]; Buchanan, XXIIIff.). Moreover, Hurst believes that the author is employing the Jewish exegetical technique of *gezerah shewah* (‘inference by analogy’, cf. B. Sanh. 99a). In Heb. 3:7-4:11, Hurst maintains, ‘What is certain is that *Auctor* [i.e. the author of Hebrews] connects, through *gezerah shewah*, the “rest” of Ps. 95 with God’s rest in Gen. 2:2, and that his understanding issues from an attempt (via Jewish hermeneutics) to deal with what the OT says about a crucial term in Ps. 95’ (Hurst, 1990, 71). In Heb. 8:5, Hurst believes that the tabernacle passage of Ex. 25:40 served to remind the author, ‘via *gezerah shewah*, of the other great text

concerning a "heavenly" sanctuary: Ezek. 40-8' (ibid. 15). Chester reckons that the argument in the first two chapters of Hebrews is only ^{intelligible} ~~intelligent~~ when it is set against the background of the developed cosmology and angelology of Judaism in the first century (cf. Chester, 61; cf. Bruce, 1962-63, 218f.). Certainly, the understanding that the Law was mediated by angels (cf. Heb. 2:2) finds clear expression in Judaism in the intertestamental era, possibly as early as the Maccabean period, and in the first century (cf. Trg. Jer. on Ex. 33:23; Jos. Ant. 15:136; cf. Acts 7:38, 53; Gal. 3:19; Jub. 1:27, 29; 2:1, 17-19; CD 5:18-6:1; Sifre Num. 102; Mek. Ex. 20:18 [Lauterbach, 2:269]; Mid. Ps. 68:10; Philo, Som. 1:141-43; Abr. 115; T. Dan. 6:2). The idea of 'tasting death' (cf. Heb. 2:9) is a Semitism not found in the OT but it occurs in rabbinic literature (cf. B. Yoma 78b; Gen. R. 9:5; Lane, 1991, 49)¹ and the concept and phraseology of the 'world to come' is very Jewish (cf. Heb. 2:5; 6:5; M. Sanh. 10:1; B. Ber. 5a, 17a). In addition, Ellingworth and Bruce maintain that τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ (Heb. 1:3b) is a Hebraic expression for 'his powerful word' (cf. Sir. 39:6, ῥήματα σοφίας αὐτοῦ; Ellingworth, 1993, 101; Bruce, 1964, 6). The comparison of God's word to a 'two-edged sword' (Heb. 4:12) is also made in

¹ In Codex Neofiti I on Dt. 32:1, the complete recension of Palestinian Pentateuch Targum, there are two examples of the full Semitic expression 'to taste the cup of death' (cf. R. Le Déaut, "Goûter le calice de la mort," Bib 43 [1962] 82-86; cf. Lane, 1991, 49). The idea of death being a cup, albeit a bitter one, can also be found in T. Abr. 1:3 and in the Gospels (cf. Matt. 20:22f. and par. Mk. 10:38f.; Matt. 26:39, 42; and par. Mk. 14:36; Lk. 22:42).

the Talmud in the words of R. Isaac: 'If one recites the *Shema*' upon his bed, it is as though he held a two-edged sword in his hand' (B. Ber. 5a). Also the exhortation 'not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together' (Heb. 10:25) appears to have an echo in the Mishnah: 'Keep not aloof from the congregation' (M. Aboth 4:5).

Because Hebrews 'never refers to the temple, any more than to circumcision', Moffatt is convinced that the author only has a book knowledge, saying, '...all his knowledge of the Jewish ritual is gained from the LXX and later tradition' (Moffatt, xvi). Moffatt observes that 'There is not a syllable in the writing which suggests that either the author or his readers had any connexion with or interest in the contemporary temple and ritual of Judaism' (ibid. xxii). He believes that the author of Hebrews was an able Greek writer and views his pentateuchal sacerdotalism as having been developed by the LXX and by the Jewish writings which were current in Greek from Aristeas to Josephus (cf. ibid. xvi; xxi; xxxiff.; Horbury, 1983, 45). If a book knowledge is all that the author of Hebrews had, then it was a very Jewish one. However, I am not convinced by Moffatt's argument. It is true that it is the Tabernacle of the Pentateuch and not the contemporary Temple and its ritual which interests the author but this does not necessarily mean that 'all his knowledge of the Jewish ritual is gained from the LXX and later tradition'. First, the Temple in Jerusalem at the turn of the era lacked the Ark of the Covenant,¹ the most

¹ 'After the Ark was taken away a stone remained there from time of the early Prophets, and it was called 'Shetiyah' [lit. foundation]' (cf. M. Yoma 5:2).

important feature of the Tabernacle since it represented the Presence of God. Also, the most solemn part of the Yom Kippur service was when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies under the cover of incense for the purpose of making atonement both for his sins and that of the people by sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant (cf. Lev. 16:11ff.). Though a stone [the 'Shetiyah'] acted as a substitute, given the importance of the Covenant and the Yom Kippur service in Hebrews, the focus of the author was always going to be on the Tabernacle or, at least, a Temple that contained this central feature of the cult, namely, the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant. Secondly, the author may be showing his intimate knowledge of, and sensitivity to, Jewish religious politics of his time by avoiding any mention of the contemporary Temple and its ritual since there were many Jews, such as those at Qumran,¹ who were opposed to the Temple at Jerusalem (cf. 11QTemple 29:2-10; Fitzmyer, 1992, 90-93), its priesthood (cf. 1QpHab 9:4-7; 4QpNah 1:11; Fitzmyer, 1992, 108) and its ritual (cf. CD 6:11-20; Fitzmyer, 1992, 88). Thirdly, the author's interest in the Tabernacle may have resulted from the idea that if the Son's High Priestly activity in the heavenly Tabernacle has succeeded the original place of the cult, (i.e. the

¹ Not that the Qumran Community were against the concept of the Temple, of priesthood and of the cult as such, quite the contrary (cf. 4Q174; CD 3:12-16), but Herod the Great's involvement and reconstruction of the Temple at Jerusalem did not endear it to the Community, nor did the Temple priests endear themselves since they were viewed as failing to carry out their duties according to tradition and in compliance with the purity regulations and because they followed a lunar calendar-observance rather than the ancient solar one (cf. Fitzmyer, 1992, 85-88, 91).

Tabernacle) then it has also succeeded all later places of the cult, such as the Second Temple in Jerusalem, and even a Third Temple. Fourthly, the Epistle 'is marked throughout by an intimate knowledge of Jewish custom and a sympathy with Jewish history and institutions which a Gentile could hardly have acquired from mere study of the Old Testament' (Scott, 1922, 19). I am convinced that Horbury is much closer to the truth when he writes:

By contrast with Moffatt, however, and with Käsemann's attribution of the high-priestly theme to Christian liturgy indebted, like Philo, to a gnostically-recoined Jewish messianism (Käsemann, pp. 107f., 124-40), the writer to the Hebrews is envisaged here not as a scholarly Hellenist *tout court*, who had nothing to do with contemporary Judaism, but as one who was in touch, like Philo and Josephus, with a living Jewish faith.

(Horbury, 1983, 45)

The Addressees

The question of the Jewish influence on the author of the Epistle is probably, as McCullough suggests, 'bound up with the question of the Jewishness or otherwise of the recipients' (McCullough, 1994, 77) since there is a common Jewish heritage which forms the common ground between the author and his addressees and to which the author keeps returning to draw further illustrations to ^{strengthen} strengthen his case (cf. Lehne, 16). Until modern times, the general assumption was that the addressees were Jewish. E. M. Roeth in 1836 was the first to suggest that the addressees were Gentile (cf. Ellingworth, 1993, 22; Kümmel, 1975, 399). He has had many successors. Ellingworth lists the following as advocating a Gentile readership: Bacon 1900, Büchel, Ménégos, Moffatt, E. F. Scott, Enslin, Johnsson 1973, Braun (cf. Ellingworth, 22 n.67). To these we could add Alexander, who believed that 'the prevailing

complexion of the community seems to have been Gentile' (cf. Alexander, 32), and Kümmel, who lists the following as having advanced the view that the readers were predominantly Gentile Christians or simply Christians: Kuss, Michel, Windisch, Albertz, Feine-Behm, Henshaw, Jülicher-Fascher, Marxsen, Michaelis, Schelkle, Wrede, Käsemann, Oepke, Schierse (cf. Kümmel, 1975, 399f.; & 399 n.49). On the other hand, the traditional view, that the addressees were of Jewish origin, is still widespread. Ellingworth lists the following as advocating a Christian-Jewish readership: Weiss 1888, Riggenbach, Appel, Badcock, Barton, W. Manson, Fransen, Reid, Bourke, Hermann, Holtz, Bonsirven (at least predominantly Jewish Christian), Médebielle, Mercier and Helyer (cf. Ellingworth, 1993 22 n.67). To these we could add many more (e.g. Nairne, 1913, 20; Buchanan, 266; Davidson, 10; Lindars, 1991, 4; Westcott, v; Hewitt, 32; P. E. Hughes, 1977, 11; Lane, 1991, iivf.; Plumber, 7; Chester, 59; J. H. Davies, 3; R. Brown, 1982, 16; Lehne, 16; A. B. Bruce, 1899, 4; F. F. Bruce, 1964, xxviff.; Longenecker, 20; [predominantly Jewish - Ellingworth, 1993, 27; Montefiore, 1964, 16]).

A number of scholars have argued that the appeal not to depart from 'the living God' (Heb. 3:12) could only be made to Gentile converts since if Jewish Christians relapsed into Judaism, this would not involve a renunciation of 'the living God' (cf. Ellingworth, 1993, 24; Bruce, 1964, xxvif.). This is not such a powerful argument. Ellingworth thinks that 'to fall away from the living God' is synonymous with a 'hardening of the heart' (cf. Heb. 3:8, 13, 15), a phrase used in the exegesis of an OT passage which reflects a Jewish-Christian

readership (cf. Ellingworth, 1993, 24). In any case, a falling away is not a simple case of returning to what they were previously but something extremely serious and non-redeemable since it is tantamount to crucifying God's Son afresh, to putting him to public shame, to treading under foot his blood of the covenant, to insulting the Holy Spirit of grace, to sinning against light and a rejection of word of God and the powers of the world to come (cf. Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31). Moreover, when one realises that for this author of Hebrews Christianity is Judaism (cf. Heb. 3:1-6; 11:1-40); that it is the fulfilment of the Jewish cultic practice and the Old Covenant which were only types foreshadowing it (cf. Heb. 8:1-13; 10:1), then, a falling away would be tantamount to a rejection of Judaism, of all that the cult and the Old Covenant pointed to, of the prophets who 'prophesied only for the days of 'the Messiah' (B. Ber. 34b; cf. Sanh. 99a; 1 Pet. 1:10; Heb. 1:1f.), of the promise(s) made to the fathers (cf. Heb. 4:1ff.; 6:11ff.; 11:39f.), of God's final and decisive revelation and of the world to come (cf. Heb. 1:1f.; 2:5). Therefore a falling away from Christianity, for our author, was nothing less than a falling away from the living God whether the individuals were Jewish or Gentile; there remaining 'no more sacrifice for sins' (Heb. 10:26); there being no other salvation history. Moreover, at Qumran, apostasy was viewed with a severity that at least appears to equal that of Hebrews. The Community Rule speaks of one who 'has turned aside from God' as being 'destroyed without pardon', as being consumed 'in everlasting destruction' as being 'among those who are cursed for ever' (1QS 2:13ff.).

The author never makes use in the Epistle, not even once, of the terms Jew, Hebrew, Gentile or Greek but the weight of probability appears to favour an original Jewish-Christian readership, not least, the title *Πρὸς Ἑβραίους* which seems to favour such a conclusion (cf. Black, 1961, 78); it is attested in all Greek MSS and in the ancient versions. There is no evidence that the Epistle was ever known by any other name (cf. ^{ELLINGWORTH} Ellingworth, 1993, 21). Those who advocate a Gentile-Christian readership are obliged to discount the title altogether, but it is likely that it represents early readers' estimate of the Epistle's character and content and original addressees as opposed to Gentiles. Moreover, the phrase *τοῖς πατράσιν* of Heb. 1:1 also favours the same conclusion (cf. *ibid.* 25).

Significantly, the author's addressees appear to have no problems such as the early Gentile churches had with the Halakah concerning such issues as circumcision, sabbath observances, or food and purity laws (Acts 15; Gal. 2:11-14; 3:1ff.). There is a conspicuous absence from the letter of all traces of pagan Hellenistic ideas affecting the mind of the community (cf. Manson, 1951, 161). There is no sign of heretical teaching among the recipients of the letter apart from the vague exhortation not to be 'carried about with divers and strange doctrines' (Heb. 13:9). This community has no problem with the very Jewish concept of resurrection (cf. Heb. 6:1-3; 11:35; 13:20) unlike a number of Gentile churches (1 Cor. 15:12; 2 Tim. 2:18). In fact, this community is at home with the exceedingly Jewish idea of being able to obtain a 'better resurrection' through suffering in this world (cf. Heb. 11:35; B. Ber. 5a; Taan. 25a; Sanh.

101a). In addition, whether the composition of the Epistle is dated pre-AD 70 (as I believe¹) or shortly after that Jewish calamity, only a Jewish-Christian community could be upbraided at this early stage of the church's development for not having progressed beyond the six Jewish doctrines in Heb. 6:1-3² and who should have by this time become teachers (cf. Heb. 5:11-14).³ For a Gentile community, such a complete grasp of these fundamental doctrines, of repentance, of faith, of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection and eternal judgment, without any trace of heretical teaching would have been cause for praise and congratulations rather than of rebuke.

Also the author's insistence that the Old Covenant is now antiquated (cf. Heb. 8:13) is particularly relevant to a community that had been (and maybe still is) disposed to live under that covenant (Bruce, 1964, xxvi). The author's appeals to the OT reflect his confidence that his addressees will recognise its authority and continue to do so even if tempted to relapse from Christianity

¹ It is difficult to believe that the author, who sought to show how the Aaronic priesthood and Temple sacrifices were now superseded by the eternal, sinless Priesthood of the Son and by the spotless offering of himself for the sins of others (cf. Heb. 2:9, 17f.; 5:9f.; 7:24-28; 8:1-13; 9:1-28), would fail to make some reference to the Temple's destruction and demise of the cult if that catastrophe had already occurred.

² There is something very Jewish about these six doctrines (i.e. for repentance - cf. M. Yoma 8:8f.; B. Yoma 86b; Sanh. 97b; Trg. Hosea 3:1; Num. R. 14:10; SS R. 1.15:1; Mid. Ps. 90:12; for faith - cf. Mek. Ex. 14:31 [Lauterbach, 1:252f.]; Sifre Dt. 330:1; for baptisms - cf. 1QS 3:4ff.; M. Yoma 3:2-6; B. Ber. 15a; Erub. 21b; Shab. 50b; Lev. R. 34:3; Yeb. 47b; for laying on of hands - cf. M. Hag. 2:2; Men. 9:7ff.; Tem. 3:4; Kel. 1:8; B. Sanh. 13b-14a; for resurrection - cf. M. Sanh. 10:1; Sot. 9:15; for judgment in the hereafter - cf. M. Abot. 4:22; B. Ber. 58b; Sanh. 91b; also cf. Kosmala, 31; Bruce, 1962-63, 224).

³ Sandegren was so struck by the author's wish that the addressees should be teachers (cf. Heb. 5:12) that he believes that the readers were former Jewish priests (cf. Sandegren, 222f.).

whereas Gentile converts to Christianity would have adopted the authority of OT as part of their new faith and if tempted to relapse, then the OT's authority was likely to go as well. Moreover, Zwemer describes Hebrews as 'a dark mystery unless we have the Old Testament key' (Zwemer, 168), and Barclay thinks the Epistle 'demands such a knowledge of the Old Testament that it must always have been a book written by a scholar for scholars' (Barclay, 1955, 1976, 7). Ellingworth observes:

In Hebrews, the evidence is overwhelming that the author expected his readers to be thoroughly acquainted with OT persons, institutions (especially cultic institutions, e.g., 9:1-10), and texts, and with the Mosaic law, and to accept unquestioningly the divine authority of the OT.

(Ellingworth, 1993, 23)

If Zwemer, Barclay and Ellingworth are right, it would favour a readership of a people well versed in the OT, such as the Jewish people.

Moreover, though the institution of sacrifice was no doubt widespread, such statements as 'without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness' (Heb. 9:22) would be either incomprehensible or contested by non-Jewish groups (cf. Ellingworth, 1993, 24). The emphasis on the Jewish cult and its place under the New Covenant seem peculiarly relevant to a Jewish-Christian readership. The status of Temple no doubt posed problems for Jewish-Christians from early on; Temple-service was thought to stabilise creation (cf. Pes. K. 1:4f. on Num. 7:1). Questions were bound to arise for such addressees as: Was atonement located in the cult or in the Messiah's vicarious death? Were they mutually exclusive? If atonement was located in the latter what was the purpose now of the Temple-service and the Aaronic priesthood? Horbury claims that 'Hebrews on

priesthood is not wholly detached...from the real historical debates of the period of the First Revolt' (Horbury, 1983, 67). Longenecker believes that the Epistle 'deserves a place among the writings classed as Jewish Christian; if not demonstrably because of its author, at least because of its addressees and its author's attempt to speak to their interests' (Longenecker, 20). In light of all this I am inclined to agree with W. Manson when he concludes:

...the evidence of the Epistle from first to last has been found to be compatible with the hypothesis of the Jewish-Christian extraction and background of the group and with its 'Hebrew' tendencies....

the initial presumption with which the inquiry started has developed a probability-value far exceeding that of a mere provisional hypothesis, and we seem justified in concluding that the Jewish-Christian character of the group has been proved, proved, that is, as far as any conclusion of the kind can be established by inductive reasoning.

(Manson, 1951, 161)

The Jewishness of the Epistle makes the central issue of this thesis, namely, the divinity of the Son, more difficult for modern scholarship. If it was a Hellenistic piece of literature, then there would be no problem with it calling a second person 'God' because of Greek polytheism. But that a Jewish literary work should do so is seen as contradicting Jewish monotheism.

The Major Issue for this Thesis

The Epistle to the Hebrews is distinctive, not least because of its christology; it contains one of the highest (if not the highest) and one of the lowest (if not the lowest) christologies in the NT. Anderson characterises the Epistle as an 'essay in christology' (cf. Anderson, 1992, 512). There is a conscious attempt to lay equal stress on the historical and eternal, the human and divine natures in the person of the Messiah (cf. Heb. 1:1-3, 8-9; 2:14-18

etc). The problem is that the terms used to describe the Son's humanity seem to contradict the terms used to describe his divinity. There is a tension between the language of the Son's 'pre-existence' to that of his 'appointment'. *If he was always the Son, how could he be appointed Son?*

Proposed Solutions

There appear to be five basic solutions offered by scholars to this christological problem of Hebrews, though within some of these categories there can be considerable variation. I have called these solutions, the adoptionist, the kenotic, the contradictionist, the Arian and the orthodox. In chapters 2, 3 and 4, in particular, I review these solutions more critically, but a brief outline here of them will be useful.

First, the adoptionist solution proposes that Hebrews stresses the humanity of the Messiah and argues that the Epistle is not as clear with regard to his divinity or even does not claim that he is divine. The theory is that Jesus, the human prophet, came to be adopted as God's Son in a supernatural sense and won his way, as it were, by outstanding goodness. The earliest advocates of this solution, generally, were the Ebionites, a Jewish 'Christian' heretical sect, who saw Jesus as fulfilling the Torah as *man*, not as Son of God. Jesus was appointed Messiah and endowed with the power of God not through real pre-existence but through the act of adoption which occurred at the time of his baptism: it is said of Jesus *qui in aquis baptismi filius a deo appellatus est* (Clementine Recognitions 1:48). In more recent times, a number of scholars have also advocated adoptionist solutions to our issue, e.g. Dunn claims that

'there is more "adoptionist" language in Hebrews than in any other NT document' (Dunn, 1980, 1989, 52).

Secondly, the kenotic solution perceives the pre-existent One as laying aside his divinity in the Incarnation by an act of self-emptying or self-limiting to the conditions of a developing human experience and after his death he is exalted as Lord and Messiah (cf. Knox, 1967, 42f.).

Thirdly, the contradictionist solution accepts that Hebrews has both pre-existence and appointment language but that the author does not hold them together or that they collide with each other (cf. Braun, 32f.; Moffatt, 1 [i.e. Roman 50]).

Fourthly, the Arian solution accepts that the Son was pre-existent but he was not eternally so and therefore, 'there was when he was not' ($\eta\tilde{\nu}$ ποτε ὅτε οὐκ $\eta\tilde{\nu}$) (cf. Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 1:9; Kelly, 228).

Fifthly, the orthodox solution accepts the tension and seeks to reconcile the two sides. The significant feature of this solution is the recognition that it is vital to Hebrews' christology that full account be taken of both the divinity and humanity of the Son, and the language of his pre-existence and appointment. That is well said, but the problem is that, despite the number of scholars making relevant statements on the issue, one is struck by a pervasive vagueness in explaining the relationship between the Son's pre-existence and his appointment. For example, Scott sees the entrance into the Holy Place as 'not so much a break between two states of being as the link that united them with one another' (Scott, 1922, 152f.) but claims a superiority of the exalted state over

the pre-existent state:

In virtue of his human struggle, Jesus became the Son of God in a fuller and richer sense than before, and thus attained to a more excellent glory.
(Ibid. 148)

This sounds very plausible but it is far from clear how one who was already the eternal divine Son of God could become His Son 'in a fuller and richer sense than before' or how one 'who is the brightness of [God's] glory and the express representation of his essence' could attain 'a more excellent glory' (cf. Heb. 1:3). Moreover, for Hebrews, the Son does not change; he is 'the same yesterday, and today, and for ever' (Heb. 13:8). The author contrasts the unchangeableness and permanence of the Son with the ageing and ultimate demise of the earth and the heavens, the works of his hands (cf. Heb. 1:10-12). Montefiore sees Jesus' appointment as High Priest as beginning at the moment of the Incarnation 'since before that the Son did not have the human experience prerequisite for the office', yet, ambiguously, he claims the appointment is everlasting (cf. Montefiore, 1964, 97). Bruce, while accepting the eternal, divine Sonship of the Messiah, sees the Son's exaltation and appointment as High Priest as marking the completeness of the incarnate Son's earthly work (cf. Bruce, 1964, 13, 94). But beyond making it clear that Hebrews is speaking of the same person, he appears to avoid tackling the issue under consideration. Hughes comes much closer to addressing the issue, when he says:

'The "designation" of Christ as *high priest* both precedes and follows the incarnation. It precedes it in that the coming of the Son into the world was in accordance with the predetermined purpose of God for the

redemption of the world - thus those who are God's redeemed people were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4); and it follows the incarnation in that what was before intended and anticipated is now completed, so that through his life, death, and exaltation Christ is now revealed as our great High Priest.

(Hughes, 1977, 188f.)

However, for the author of Hebrews, the christology of the Messiah and his High Priesthood, ^{are} ~~is~~ inseparably combined with that of the pre-existent Son throughout the Epistle (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:16f.; 3:1-6; 4:14; 5:8; 6:6; 10:29). Hebrews presents a pre-existence of the Son that goes far beyond merely existing as the saints do in the eternal counsel and election of God (cf. Eph. 1:4). For example, this pre-existence of the Son involves: first, his active participation in the creation and preservation of the universe (cf. Heb. 1:2f.); secondly, the building of a redeemed household of God in OT times (cf. Heb. 3:1-6; 11:1-40); and thirdly, a pre-existent conversation regarding his Incarnation (cf. Heb. 10:5-9).

The paradoxical question, *If he was always the Son, how could he be appointed Son?* is still unresolved and therefore the tension remains acute as ever. In this thesis I shall argue that the first four solutions involve distortions and mis-readings of the evidence. The fifth solution is on the right lines but, before it can be unequivocally accepted, a fresh discussion of the evidence is necessary.

Chapter One addresses Heb. 1:1-2a and discusses: (a) the purpose of the Epistle in general as to whether it is more a theological and pastoral letter than a polemical treatise, and (b) whether there was in pre-Christian Palestine a

messianic application of the title 'Son of God'.

Chapter two addresses Heb. 1:2b, 3b and reviews critically the adoptionist and kenotic solutions.

Chapter three addresses Heb. 5:5-10 and seeks, while acknowledging the tension in Hebrews' christology, to answer the case of the contradictionist school by presenting a revised orthodox solution which shows that the tension need not be understood in contradictory terms just as Yahweh's annual re-enthronement at the New Year festivals in ancient Israel was not seen as denying His eternal Kingship.

Chapter four addresses Heb. 1:3a and, in particular, seeks to show the weakness of the Arian solution by showing that the author of Hebrews had, at least, a binitarian view of the Godhead; the eternal Son, who shares the same divine essence as ~~the~~ God the Father, being the second person of that Godhead.

Chapter five addresses Heb. 1:8 and seeks to show that the author of Hebrews called the Son ὁ θεός, thus ^{strengthening} ~~strengthening~~ the case for the orthodox solution.

Chapter six addresses Heb. 2:5-9 and seeks to show that the author applied the title 'Son of Man' in Ps. 8 to the Son with his Incarnation in mind.

Chapter seven addresses Heb. 2:16 and seeks to strengthen the case that the author had an incarnational christology and that the Son, in his person, united two natures, the divine and the human.

The Appendix seeks to show that, at least, a binitarian view of the Godhead was widespread in the various Judaismisms of the first century.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MESSIANIC SON

Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι
ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατέρας ἐν τοῖς προφήταις
ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων
ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ [1:1-2a]

The opening verses of Hebrews (1:1-4), like those of John's Gospel, are exceedingly significant as they contain the key to, and set the tone for, the whole Epistle. In them, the author either touches on, or alludes to, some of the most important themes of Hebrews, such as the Son's Messianic role, his superiority, his appointment as heir, his creative and sustaining power, his pre-existence, his likeness to the Father, his exaltation and High Priestly work. The prime objective in the exegesis of these opening verses of Hebrews, which Barclay refers to as 'the most sonorous piece of Greek in the whole of the New Testament' (Barclay, 11), is to show that the adoptionist, kenotic, Arian, and contradictionist solutions to the problem of Hebrews' christology are open to many objections and to indicate that Hebrews is best understood by the orthodox solution.

In this chapter there are two main issues. First, Is the purpose of the Epistle more theological and pastoral than polemical? Secondly, Was the designation 'Son of God' a messianic title in Palestinian Judaism prior to the Christian era? My objectives here are to show that the author's comparison of the Son with the prophets is more theological and pastoral than polemical and

to argue that even before the early church applied the appellation 'Son of God' to Jesus, thus designating his nobility and his unique relationship with God, it was a Jewish messianic title in Palestine.

Hebrews - A Pastoral Letter?

Chrysostom and Moffatt may be right in suggesting πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως to be a 'sonorous hendiadys for "variously"' (Moffatt, 2), and that the author is not proposing that the revelation ἐν τοῖς προφήταις was inferior because it was fragmentary and varied. It may be that the expression signalizes 'the variety and fulness of the Old Testament Word of God' (Davidson, 39). It was given in sundry portions and it was communicated in diverse forms such as God's mighty acts in history, theophanies, visions, dreams, auditions, signs, oracles, Urim and Thummim, angels, and ecstasy. The very number of prophets involved suggests something of the fulness as well as the richness of the nature of God's revelation under the old dispensation. The author is probably using προφῆται in a wider sense than in Heb. 11:32 and is denoting the entire succession of those who declared God's word, both before and after Moses (cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37). Joshua is a prophet (cf. Sir. 46:1) and the patriarchs are God's προφῆται and χριστοί (cf. Ps. 105:15). According to the rabbis, Balaam and his father, Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite were all prophets (cf. B. BB 15b). Of course, the Gentile prophets were not believed to be inspired to the same degree as Hebrew prophets, a point amply illustrated in

the Midrash Rabbah (cf. Gen. R. 52:5). The use of *πάλαι* as opposed to *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων* may be an echo of a current belief in some sections at least of Judaism that *προφῆται* belonged to bygone order of things (cf. 2 Bar. 85:1-3; B. Sanh. 11a; BB 12a). The *τούτων* is unique here but the same idea is expressed in 1 Pet. 1:20 by *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων* and matches *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν* in the LXX (cf. Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Jer. 23:20; 49:39 [25:18]; Dan. 10:14; also cf. Dt. 4:30; 31:29), a translation of the Hebrew *בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים* 'at the latter days' (of history). By the addition of *τούτων*, the author is implying that the end of 'the present age' (*עולם הזה*) has arrived and that he and his addressees stood on the threshold of 'the age to come' (*עולם הבא*) (cf. Heb. 2:5; 6:5). In between this 'present age' of imperfection, conflict, trial and servitude, and the 'age to come' of the perfect reign of the Messiah (cf. Trg. 1 Kgs. 4:33; Num. R. 13:12; Pes. R. 36:2), the Jews placed the 'Messianic Age' or 'the days of the Messiah'. Sometimes they were reckoned in the former, sometimes in the latter, and sometimes distinct from both (cf. B. AZ. 9a; Ber. 17a; 34b; Pes. 68a; Sanh. 91b; 97a; Shab. 113b; 151b; M. Ber. 1:5; Ex. R. 18:11; Dt. R. 1:19; 11:10). The passage from one age to the other would be marked by a period of intense sorrow and anguish, 'the travails of the Messiah' (cf. Matt. 24:8; B. Pes. 118a; Sanh. 97a; 98a-b; Shab. 118a; Suk. 52a; SS. R. 2:13. 4; Pes. R. 34:2). However, for this Messianic age 'All the prophets prophesied' (B. Sanh. 99a; cf. Ber. 34b; 1 Pet. 1:10).

Some scholars view this comparison of the prophets, and later of the

angels (cf. 1:4-13), of Moses (cf. 3:1-6), of Joshua (cf. 4:1-11) and the Aaronic priesthood (cf. 5:1-10; 7:1-28) with the Son as having a polemical nature. Yadin sees the addressees as a group of converted members of the Dead Sea sect who retained some of their old beliefs and that the Epistle is a polemic against these DSS beliefs (i.e. the eschatological prophet; the two Messiahs; the superiority of the archangel Michael to these Messiahs) (cf. Yadin 1958, 36-55). Rabbi Sandmel claims:

In the Middle Ages Judaism was not infrequently described by Christians elegantly as superstition or less elegantly as vomit. The author of Hebrews would undoubtedly have rejected such ascriptions, but they are a logical though less genteel sequel to the comparisons couched in the polished prose of the Epistle.

(Sandmel, 1974, 232)

This 'logical though less genteel sequel to the comparisons' appears to lie behind the anti-Judaic interpretation which B. P. W. S. Hunt and Vacher Burch bring to the Epistle (cf. Hunt, 1964, 308ff.; Burch, 75ff.). Such an interpretation of the Epistle can have a profound impact on one's understanding of, and approach to, the Epistle as a whole. Hunt says,

But when we realise that anti-Judaic apologia often bore the title of *πρὸς Ἰουδαίους* we also realise that the title does not mean "To the Hebrews" but "Against the Hebrews"; that is against the Judaisers in the Christian Church. Its contents certainly bear out such a title, for its whole object is to show that the Jewish Temple with its High Priesthood has been supplanted by the High Priesthood of Christ, and that its sacrifices were intended as a shadow of the sacrifice of Christ Himself.

(Hunt, 408f.)

More recently, Richard Dormandy, who also believes that 'The Epistle to the Hebrews is a polemical apologia' and that its *Sitz im Leben* is 'to be found in conflict between emerging church and synagogue' (Dormandy, 372), has

argued that 'the polemical influence is a powerful one, and can be seen to be a controlling factor in Hebrews' (ibid. 371). Dormandy claims concerning Heb. 1:1-2, 'The key to this understanding is to see the text as belonging to the same broad traditions as the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen....implicating as it does, mainstream Judaism in the rejection of God's final revelation to them and particularly in the death of Jesus' (ibid.).

My original reaction to Hebrews was to regard it as an anti-Judaic treatise, a polemic as much as (or even more than) an apology. Now I believe that this is a mistaken understanding of, and approach to, the Epistle for several reasons. First, there is to all intents and purposes a total absence of false teachers, leaders or 'Judaisers' troubling these addressees. Though the author exhorts his readers not to be 'carried about with divers and strange doctrines' (Heb. 13:9), there is no mention of any particular heresy in the community (cf. ibid. 6:1-3).

Secondly, apart from the genre of our passage being completely different from the allegorical parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, the *Sitz im Leben* of each passage is totally dissimilar. The telling of the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen is portrayed by all the synoptics as taking place within a confrontational context. In Mark's Gospel, the parable forms part of the conflict stories, the chief priests, scribes and elders being pictured as challenging Jesus' authority to do the things which he did (cf. Mk. 11:1-12:44; Matt. 21; Lk. 20). Even without the context the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen is implicitly polemic and may originally have been a call to

repentance. Moreover, the description of the Son being killed and thrown out of the city is the last thing that is said about him; he has no further role. If this tragic fate of the Son is not the end of the story then it must surely be the appearance of the Father, the Lord of the vineyard, to destroy the wicked husbandmen and give the vineyard to others (cf. O'Neill, 1988, 486). Hebrews stands in stark contrast to this parable. The Son's death is portrayed more as a vicarious self-offering than a murder (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:9, 14ff.; 5:8f.; 7:27; 9:14; 10:12ff.). In addition, the Son's role certainly does not end with his death. His exaltation to the Father's right hand and his heavenly High Priestly work on behalf of his people are central themes of the Letter (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:17f.; 4:14ff.; 7:24ff.; 9:11ff., 24ff.; 10:12f., 21ff.; 12:2; 13:20). Also the Son is expected to return a second time (cf. Heb. 9:28), and there is no mention in this Epistle of God's revelation being given to others. Moreover, the author of Hebrews is certainly not condemning the revelation of the prophets by whom *πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν* (Heb. 1:1). Nor is he speaking against Moses who was *πιστὸς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ ὡς θεραπῶν εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν λαληθησομένων* (Heb. 3:5). Also even the term *θεράπων* applied to Moses in Heb. 3:5 is not a derisory expression. In the LXX, it is used only of Moses (cf. Ex. 14:31; Num. 12:7; Wis. 10:16; Bauer, 359), and differs from *δοῦλος*, as implying *free service* (cf. Liddell & Scott, 363). The rabbis regarded being called a 'servant of the Lord' as an honour:

In calling Moses 'the servant,' it is not a derision of Moses that Scripture speaks, but rather in his praise.

For so we find that the former prophets are called servants, as it is said, 'For the Lord God will do nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets' (Amos 3:7).

(Sifre Dt. 357:11; cf. Sifre Num. 103:3)

Moreover, he is not speaking against the being and work of the angels who are ^{εἰς} διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν (Heb. 1:14). Nor is he opposing the revelation of the Torah which was communicated through the medium of the angels and concerning which πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ παρακοὴ ἔλαβεν ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν (Heb. 2:2). Also the author is not belittling the priesthood of Aaron who was καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ (Heb. 5:4) as was the Son (cf. 5:5). Nor is the author saying that animal sacrifices should not have been offered year by year which were a Σκιὰν... τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων (Heb. 10:1). Of course, any positive statement (and Hebrews is full of these) will appear polemical to those who hold the opposite view, but there is a complete lack of polemical language in our Epistle in contrast to such as characterises some NT passages (cf. Jn. 8:37-47; Acts 2:23-24; 3:13-16; 7:51-53; 1 Thes. 2:14-16; Rev. 2:9). If there is an underlying polemic in Hebrews, which I doubt, then it is very much subsidiary to the author's use of all these contrasts as a sort of foil for the superiority of the person and revelation of the unique Son of God, who is Messiah, High Priest and the ultimate and final revelation of God (cf. Heb. 1:1-3; 3:1-6; 4:14-16; 5:5-10; 6:19-20; 7:1-10:23). Despite Rabbi Sandmel's rather pessimistic view of the logical sequel to the comparisons in the Epistle, he is forced to

acknowledge:

calmness
... it is written with some ~~elamness~~ and gentility, and it avoids the slur and the patently polemical. It exalts Christianity not by deprecating Judaism, but by restrained praise of it. The virtue of Christianity for the author is that it is even better than Judaism. He draws elaborate contrasts not between a bad and a good, but between a good and a better.

(Sandmel, 1956, 1974, 227)

The author of Hebrews is primarily concerned with his addressees, Christian Jews, whom he calls 'holy brethren' (cf. Heb. 3:1), who are members of God's household (cf. Heb. 3:6), who are partakers of the Messiah (3:14), and who have a right to enter the heavenly Holy of Holies through the blood of Jesus (cf. Heb. 4:14ff.; 10:19ff.). The struggle between the church and the synagogue may lie in the background (cf. Heb. 13:10ff.) inasmuch as the old ways and traditions still had some drawing power on these recipients of the Epistle. It is true that the addressees were still immature spiritually (cf. Heb. 5:11ff.), and that their faith in, and knowledge of, Jesus was probably still something tacked on to the end of their Judaism and they had failed to appreciate how central, how decisive, how fundamental the revelation of the Son was to the whole revelation of God, to His eternal purposes, to the world to come and to the whole process of salvation history. On the one hand, these Hebrew Christians were in danger of neglecting this 'great salvation' which was mediated to mankind, not by the hand of angels as the Torah was, but by the very Son of God himself (cf. Heb. 2:1-4), and so the addressees seemed to be on the verge of almost imperceptibly falling away into hopeless and final apostasy (cf. Heb. 6:4-20). On the other hand, they were in danger of deliberately

deserting their faith through wilfully sinning on account of persecution, not realising how serious this would be for their eternal welfare (cf. Heb. 10:25-33). However, the author's purpose is pastoral and seeks through theology to exhort his addressees to grow in grace and mature spiritually. The Letter is in the author's own words a λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως (Heb. 13:22). There is a constant exhortation to 'go on unto perfection' (Heb. 6:1), to 'hold fast the profession of our faith' (Heb. 10:23; cf. 3:6; 6:11), to 'be not slothful' (Heb. 6:12), to forsake not 'the assembling of ourselves together' (Heb. 10:25), to 'cast not away therefore your confidence' (Heb. 10:35), to 'run with patience the race that is set before us' (Heb. 12:1), to 'lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees' (Heb. 12:12) and to look 'diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God' (Heb. 12:15; cf. 4:1). The Son is set forth as an example as one who suffered but still finished the race (Heb. 12:2-4) while the catena of heroes of the faith in ch. 11 are set forth as having endured to the end and 'having obtained a good report' (Heb. 11:39). The more that I have studied the Epistle, the more I am convinced that the Epistle is first and foremost, from beginning to end, a pastoral letter. B. Lindars puts it elegantly when he says:

Hebrews is rather like the prophet Ezekiel. He appears strange and impersonal and distant at first, but closer acquaintance shows him to be a deeply caring person with a strong pastoral sense. In fact Hebrews' concept of the pastoral character of priesthood is one of the points of lasting value in this very distinctive New Testament writing.

(Lindars, 1991, xii)

What Heb. 1:1-2 does have in common with the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen is the idea of continuity between the person and work of the Son

and those who preceded him. In fact, a more dominant and certain underlying theme than that of polemic in the Epistle is that of 'continuity' between the OT and NT, between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant (cf. 1:1-2; 2:1-4; 3:1-6; 5:1-10; 6:1-3; 11:1-39), a fact that is amply displayed by the author's use of the Scriptures in which, perhaps more than any other NT writing, this Epistle is steeped. The author's use of the Scriptures and his method of argument appear to owe much to the influence of Jewish rabbis who of course used the Tanak (i.e. the Hebrew Bible). There is a stress here in these opening verses (ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας) on special revelation which the *same* God has given in two stages: first to the fathers by the prophets, and finally in the Son, the one final source of all truth. The implication is that without special revelation God is unknowable by unaided natural reason. The plight of mankind would have been desolate and desperate had God remained silent and unapproachable, but God has spoken and so there is hope. In Heb. 1:1-2, the author is not saying that there is a break between the Old and the New. Rather he is stressing the continuity between them. For him, the OT witness foreshadowed God's final and decisive word in his Son; it was necessary that the type should give way to the antitype. The Son, for the writer of Hebrews, is the Prophet *par excellence*; he is the culmination of all the prophecies and promises of the past (cf. 2 Cor. 1:20); 'All the prophets prophesied [all the good things] only in respect of the Messianic era' (B. Sanh. 99a; cf. Ber. 34b).

The absence in ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ of the article with υἱός is not unusual for Hebrews (cf. 3:6; 5:8; 7:28). Though the article is often omitted

after a preposition, it may be as Hughes and Illingworth suggest, that the anarthrous noun serves to emphasize the absolute change of category to that of Sonship (cf. Hughes, 1977, 36 n.3; Illingworth, 1993, 93f.). And herein possibly lies the real contrast, the chief point of difference. The author's aim is to establish the supremacy of the Son and his revelation; the prophets made known God's word as servants, but now He has spoken in His unique Son.

The Unique Sonship of the Son

For Hebrews, the Son was the Messiah who 'purged our sins' (Heb. 1:3), clearly identifying him as Jesus, τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν (Heb. 3:1). The 'Son of God' concept is a dominant factor in Hebrews' christology; the title for the writer is one of his significant christological concepts as it was for the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel. This conception of the Son of God was also the foundation of the belief of the first Christians who in light of the Easter experience confessed the Messiah as the 'Son' (cf. Acts 8:36-38;¹ 9:20; 13:33; Rom. 1:3f; 5:10; 8:32; Gal. 4:4; 1 Thes. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:23; 4:15; Rev. 2:18). For Hebrews, as for other writers in the NT such as Paul, the Lord spoken of in the LXX was not always and only God the Father; it could also be his Son, the Messiah (cf. Heb. 1:8f.; 10ff.; Rom. 10:9-13). But compared to the almost incidental references to the Son of God in the Pauline Epistles, there is in Hebrews a more deliberate exposition of

¹ In some MSS v.37 is omitted, but Cullmann reckons that even if it is an interpolation, it was an early one (cf. Cullmann, 1959, 290f.).

the theme. The term 'Son' is applied to the Messiah eleven times in the Epistle (cf. 1:2, 5, 8; 3:6 4:14; 5:5, 8; 6:6; 7:3, 28; 10:29). For Davidson, 'The Sonship of Christ is the fundamental idea of the Epistle. It is this relationship to God that enables Him to be the Author of salvation to men' (cf. Davidson, 79). Hahn attempts to draw a distinction between the title 'Son of God' and the absolute title 'the Son' claiming that ^{they} ~~the both~~ have different roots (Hahn, 279). Whatever truth there is in his argument, it is clear that Hebrews equates 'the Son' with the 'Son of God' (cf. 1:2, 8; 3:6; 5:8; 7:28 with 4:14; 6:6; 10:29 and the OT citations in 1:5; 5:5). The title 'Messiah' probably echoed more the concept of the Davidic royalty (cf. Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, 45; Mk. 10:47, 48; 12:35, 37; Lk. 18:38, 39; 20:41, 44; Jn. 7:42), but I wish to argue that the title 'Son of God' denotes something far greater: a unique, pre-existent, divine entity; an equality with God (cf. Jn. 5:18; 19:7). Bousset correctly points out, 'that in the title "Son of God" the community's faith simply heard the proclamation of the full deity of Christ of the earliest times' (Bousset, 1970, 320).

Angels, in the OT, are called the **בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** 'sons of god' (Gen. 6:2; Job 1:6; 2:1; cf. Pss. 29:1; 89:7). It's possible that the expression goes back to the Canaanite (or at least a non-Israelite) religion when such beings were regarded as gods, the underlying concept being that of a pantheon of gods under the supreme God whom the others worship (cf. Fohrer, TDNT 8:347). While the idea of a physical father-son relation between Yahweh and other divine beings or angels, such as one finds elsewhere in the ancient Orient, is quite alien to the

OT and is not even remotely suggested, Israel, especially under the influence of its Canaanite environment, probably took over the idea of a pantheon and a divine council under Yahweh the supreme God (cf. 1 Kgs. 22:19ff.; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; 38:7; Ps. 82:6; 89:6; Fohrer, TDNT 8:348f.). It is possible that at that early stage the **בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** were individual gods but stripped of their powers. Under the influence of the ^{Yahwistic} ~~Yahwehistic~~ faith, the expression has come not to describe divine beings but to characterise 'groups or individuals who stand in a peculiarly close religious relation with God' (Taylor, 1953, 54). McKenzie, in his article 'The Divine sonship of the Angels', a study of the expression **בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** in the OT, concludes 'the title "sons of God" is applied to the angels as an expression of their close and familiar association with God; and this association is not primarily an association of nature or of likeness, but of will' (McKenzie, 300).

Frequently the father-son relationship is employed to denote the relation of Yahweh to Israel. Yahweh calls Israel 'my son, even my firstborn' (Ex. 4:22; cf. Jer. 31:9); 'my dear son' (Jer. 31:20; cf. Hos. 11:1) and gives him a special place among the nations (cf. Jer. 3:19). Moreover, Yahweh is called by Israel 'my father' (Jer. 3:4, 19; cf. Dt. 32:6). The totality of Israel consists of Yahweh's sons and daughters (cf. Dt. 14:1; 32:5, 19; Isa. 43:6; 45:11) which the wife Israel (cf. Hos. 2:4) or Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 16:20) has borne Him. The father-son relationship is also applied to the righteous (cf. Sir. 4:10; Ps. Sol. 13:9; 18:4). However, in no case does this father-son relation express a connection between Yahweh and Israel (or the righteous) which has arisen

naturally and which is by nature indissoluble; rather it is used to characterise 'groups or individuals who stand in a peculiarly close religious relation with God' (Taylor, 1953, 54). The metaphor was useful as it reflected the concern, the pity and the sense of responsibility that Yahweh felt for His elect people and for those who feared Him (cf. Dt. 1:31; 8:5; Isa. 66:13; Mal. 3:17; Ps. 27:10; 68:5; 103:13; Ass. Moses 10:3). Especially when God chastens his people for their sins, he is portrayed as acting like a father (cf. Ps. Sol. 13:8, 9; Wis. 12:19-21; 2 Bar. 13:9; also Pss. 73:14; 94:12). Some writers use it only in an eschatological context so that the groups and individuals concerned are only truly sons of God in the consummation (cf. Jub. 1:23-26, 28; Ps. Sol. 17:27-30; Sib. Or. 3:702-4; T. Levi 18:8, 12-13; T. Judah 24:3). A number of rabbis stressed that Israel's divine sonship was grounded in the Torah. R. Akiba derives from Dt. 14:1 the assertion 'Beloved are Israel, for they were called children of God; still greater was the love in that it was made known to them' (M. Abot 3:15). According to R. Judah b. Shalom (c. 370) 'God said to Israel: "When are you called My children? When you receive My words"' (Dt. R. 7:9). The same thought underlines R. Judah's interpretation of the verse, *Ye are sons of the Lord your God*;¹ 'when you behave as sons you are designated sons; if you do not behave as sons, you are not designated sons' (B. Kid. 36a).

Hebrews makes it absolutely clear that the Son is not merely a son of

¹ There is a question mark concerning this verse; the Talmud does not give its Scriptural reference. Possibly it is a paraphrase of Hos. 1:10 *Ye are the sons of the living God*.

God in the sense that it is applied to angels (cf. Heb. 1:4-14). With regard to God's people, whether we speak of them as sons of God in the present time (cf. Heb. 12:5-11) or in the world to come (cf. Heb. 2:10), their sonship for the author of Hebrews is derived from their response to the unique Son of God. There is some ambiguity in Heb. 2:10 whether it is the Father or the Son who leads the πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν (cf. Lane, 1991, 55f.; Moffatt, 31), but it seems that most scholars believe that it is the Father who does the leading. Though the author does not use Paul's phrase υἱοὶ θεοῦ (cf. Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26; also 2 Cor. 6:18), πολλοὺς υἱοὺς certainly implies 'of God' and there is no question here of 'the universal sonship possessed by all men' (cf. Ellingworth, 1993, 159). Throughout this passage Heb. 2:10-18 and beyond, the writer is concerned with the household of God and the large number of sons ^{who} are so closely related to the person and work of Jesus that the phrase πολλοὺς υἱοὺς must refer to believers, that is, those who are sanctified (cf. Heb. 2:11). Moreover, though I believe no inferiority of sonship of believers is intended here since the Son himself is not ashamed to call them brothers (cf. Heb. 2:11ff.), πολλοὺς υἱοὺς stands in contrast to the one unique Son of God; the 'many' stands over against the 'one' (cf. Heb. 9:28; Isa. 53:11f.; Mk. 10:45; 14:24; Rom. 5:12-21; 8:29; Rev. 7:9-14; Moffatt, 30; Ellingworth, 1993, 160). The sonship of believers is different from, and dependent on, the Sonship and work of the Messiah whose uniqueness is the central theme of the first chapter in particular. Although Ellingworth is uncomfortable with Alcuin's

comment, 'He is the Son, and we are the sons; he true-born, we adopted' because of its Pauline overtones, it does not seem inappropriate (cf. *ibid.*; Hughes, 1977, 100). The redeemed ones (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:9; 9:12, 28) are portrayed as sons, not in their own right, but the Father has effected their sonship by virtue of their response to His unique Son (cf. Heb. 5:9; cf. Jn. 1:12), who is said to be τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν (Heb. 2:10), the αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου (Heb. 5:9), the πρόδρομος (Heb. 6:20), and the 'author and perfecter of faith' (Heb. 12:2; cf. Bruce, 1964, 43f.; 105; Hughes, 1977, 99f.; Attridge, 154; Lane, 1991, 57f.; Ellingworth, 1993, 160). In addition, it is only the Son in his office of High Priest that gives the 'many sons' the boldness and confidence to enter the Holy of Holies (cf. Heb. 4:14ff.; 10:19ff.; Lane, 1991, 57f.). In fact, for the writer of Hebrews, the sonship of all Israel and of the righteous under the Old Covenant was also derived from this unique Son who founded the OT household of God (cf. Heb. 3:1-6). The benefits of the Son's redeeming work availed not only for the New Covenant believers but for all who were 'called to receive the promise of eternal inheritance' under the Old Covenant inasmuch as it had retrospective value (cf. Heb. 9:15; Moffatt, 127; Montefiore, 1964, 156; Attridge, 255). The same messianic τελείωσις of the Son belongs to the heroes under the old dispensation as it does for those under the new who 'show a like strenuous faith' (Moffatt, 191; cf. 11:39f.). For this writer there was only one house of God for all God's people, whether they lived under the Old Covenant or the New. Both Moses and the Hebrew-Christian addressees

were members of the same house which the Son founded, built and was over (cf. Heb. 3:1-6).

In contrast, to these other uses of son(s) of God, for our author the Messiah's unique Sonship of God means, as we shall see in the following chapters, full participation in the Father's deity, sharing the same divine nature and essence. Hengel claims that in these first verses of Hebrews 'the christological outline of Phil. 2.6-11 is being made more precise. Here the "notion of equality with God is defined (more exactly)"' (Hengel, 1976, 1986, 84). Hengel also says, 'One might almost regard the whole of Hebrews as a large-scale development of the christological theme which is already present in the Philippians hymn' (ibid. 85). Hebrews seems to be throughout the Epistle conscious of the importance of this theme. The Son's mission and High Priesthood rests on his unique oneness with the Father (cf. 1:8; 2:10f.; 3:6; 4:14; 7:28).

Son of God - A Messianic Title?

There has been a tendency to deny that the title 'Son of God' was a messianic title in pre-Christian Palestine. Bousset believes that the title as a messianic ideal 'becomes comprehensible precisely in the Hellenistic milieu' (Bousset, 1970, 94). Bultmann also suggests that the origins of the Messiah as 'Son of God' are in Hellenism, claiming '*the figure of a Son of God was familiar to Hellenistic ways of thinking, familiar in several variations*' (Bultmann, 1:130). Among these 'variations', he mentions 'such "divine men"

(θεῖοι ἄνδρες), who claimed to be sons of (a) god or were regarded as such' (ibid.). Other variations include the 'divine figures, whose origin lies in ancient vegetation-gods' and 'the figure of the "Redeemer" in the Gnostic myth' (ibid.). In fact, Bultmann claims, it is this latter variation that is attested in Hebrews' idea of the Messiah as Son of God (ibid. 1:132).

It is true that υἱός occurs as a translation in the style of oriental and especially Egyptian rulers: 'son of God,' 'son of Helios,' 'son of Zeus' (cf. Martitz, TDNT, 8:336). Alexander the Great in his campaign was called the 'son of Ammon' (= the Greek 'son of Zeus') by the Ammon oracle in the Libyan desert (ibid.). Heracles is said to have believed that he was the son of Zeus (ibid. 8:337). However, it is inconceivable that the monotheistic early Christian Church, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in particular, would look for christological insight to Greek religion, which belongs to the class of ancient polytheisms, to which belonged also the religions of Rome, of Egypt, of the Indo-Iranians, and most of the religions of the Ancient Near East (cf. Boardman, 254). The omnipotent God of the OT and NT and the Messianic Son of God stand over against such polytheistic religions, in which each god has a defined sphere of influence whether it is love (i. e. Aphrodite), or war (i.e. Ares), or light (i.e. Apollo), etc. Homer lists the ten most important gods in action: Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Hermes, Hephaestus, and Ares and alongside these were innumerable lesser figures (cf. Boardman, 254). The balanced worshipper paid respect to them all since to neglect one god

such as Aphrodite was to reject an area of human experience. Even Zeus, the 'father of the gods', had a father, Cronus. Moreover, it is not in power and glory (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:9) that these deities reign but 'In green groves, in fountains and streams, and in the darkness of the forest rule the gods and goddesses; fertility and blessings come from them, but so do drought and punishment' (Lohse, 222).

Moreover, the constancy, eternity and unchangeableness of Yahweh and the Son of God (cf. Ps. 102:25; Isa. 34:4; Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8) stand over against the gods of the Mystery religions, the fertility and nature deities who continually like the seasons pass through the metamorphosis of becoming and passing away. The very kinship to these ancient vegetation-gods of the gnostic 'Redeemer' which Bultmann recognises (Bultmann, 1:130), would itself disqualify this mythological figure as being a christological source for such an OT scholar as the writer of Hebrews. In addition, for this author, the Son is an individual pre-existent person who took upon himself human nature, flesh and blood (cf. Heb. 2:14ff.), and suffered on the cross and died in his own right, albeit vicariously for others (cf. Heb. 2:9, 18; 5:7f.; 12:2ff.), and was exalted in glory and honour to God's right hand (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:9; 8:1; 10:12). This stands in stark contrast to gnosticism which 'contains only the notion of the Redeemer's coming and going as his humiliation and exaltation, not necessarily implying that his departure from the earth is caused by a violent death' (Bultmann, 1:298). This gnostic Redeemer is not an individual person, as Bultmann puts it,

'Just as the Redeemer himself is a cosmic figure and not an individual person so is his *soma* a cosmic entity' (ibid. 1:299). In the final analysis and contrary to Hebrews' christology, Bultmann is forced to confess:

Gnosticism cannot acknowledge the real humanity of Jesus. Apparent humanity to a pre-existent heavenly being is only a disguise; and where Gnosticism adapts the Christian tradition to its own use, if it does not insist upon declaring Jesus' flesh and blood to be only seeming a body, it has to make a distinction between the Redeemer and the historical person Jesus and assert some such thing as that the former was only transiently united with the latter (in the baptism) and left him before the passion.

(Bultmann, 1:168)

We must, therefore, look much closer to home, namely, Palestinian Judaism, for the concept of the Messiah as Son of God. Jeremias claims:

'...no evidence is forthcoming for the application of the title 'Son of God' to the Messiah in pre-Christian Palestinian Judaism. No Jew, hearing in our parable the story of the mission and slaying of the "son", could have dreamed of applying it to the sending of the Messiah.'

(Jeremias, 1954, 1963, 1972, 73).

Fitzmyer insists that 'There is nothing in the OT or Palestine Jewish tradition that we know of to show that "Son of God" had a messianic nuance' (Fitzmyer's *The Gospel According to Luke* 1:206). Jeremias argues, on the basis of the evidence of the Chester-Beatty Papyrus¹ that the use of 'my son' in 1 En. 105:2 is an interpolation (cf. Jeremias, 1954, 1963, 1972, 73 n.86). Moreover, though in a number of passages of the Latin and Syriac texts of 4 Ezra (i.e. 7:28f. 13:32, 37, 52; 14:9) the Messiah is clearly identified as 'my Son', the originality of this reading has been disputed because there are textual

¹ *The Last Chapters of Enoch in Greek*, London, 1937, ed. C. Bonner, pp. 76f. (cf. Jeremias, 1954, 1963, 1972, 74 n.86).

variants with some versions using words that mean 'servant' and because the Greek version has not been preserved. The chief opinions held concerning these texts are either that the term that is translated by Latin *filius* was υἱός in Greek and that this represented the Hebrew בֶּן or that it was Greek παῖς corresponding to the Hebrew עֶבֶד. The former opinion supports a Jewish titling of the Messiah as 'Son of God' while the latter would invoke the 'servant' language' concerning him (cf Stone, 1990, 207). Stone gives the argument for the latter opinion as follows:

Had any Christian translator (and all the translators can be assumed to be Christian) had the word 'son' before him, referring to the Messiah or the Christ, it is hard to assume that he would change it for some other word. However, if he had a word before him that could mean 'son' but could also mean 'child' or 'servant,' he might have translated it by a word that was unambiguously 'son' in some cases, while retaining a translation of it as 'young man' or 'servant' in others. The word παῖς in Greek has precisely this set of meanings, and indeed it may translate Hebrew words that mean 'child' or 'servant.'

(ibid.)

Though the situation is far from unambiguous, as far as I can determine, the weight of modern scholarship seems to favour the latter opinion (cf. ibid.; Taylor, 1953, 53 n.2; Lohse, TDNT 8:361; Jeremias, 1954, 1963, 1972, 73 n.86; Stone, 1990, 207f.). Collins argues that even if the Greek παῖς μου is the original reading a translation of 'my son' need not be wrong; in the Wisdom of Solomon, the righteous man who calls himself παῖδα Κυρίου (cf. Wis. 2:13) can also 'boast that God is his father' (cf. Wis. 2:16; Collins, 1993, 77). Moreover, as Collins observes, the scenario of 4 Ezra where the messianic figure 'will stand on the top of mount Zion' and 'will reprove the assembled

nations for their ungodliness' (cf. 4 Ezra 13:32-41) appears to be dependent on Ps. 2 where God sets His anointed one, whom He addresses 'You are my Son, this day I have begotten you', upon His holy hill of Zion inspiring dread among the assembled nations (cf. Collins, 1993, 76f.). However, even though Collins may have a point with regard to 4 Ezra 13, his concession that $\pi\alpha\tilde{\iota}\varsigma$ may be the original reading, the ambiguity, the argument for it and weight of modern ^{scholarship} ~~scholarship~~ favouring it, at least, undermine the use of 'My Son' as a title for the Messiah in 4 Ezra.

Nevertheless, I must take issue with Jeremias (and Fitzmyer) regarding his claim that '...no evidence is forthcoming for the application of the title 'Son of God' to the Messiah in pre-Christian Palestinian Judaism.' There is in the OT an important group of texts employing the 'son of God' concept, where under the Davidic covenant, the king is called God's son (cf. 2 Sam. 7:14; Pss. 2:7; 89:26f. also Ps. 80:15[MT 16]). There is no question here of a divinisation of the king of Judah but rather the legitimation of a descendant of the Davidic dynasty to rule God's people by Yahweh calling him His son (cf. Forher, DTNT 8:349ff.). What is significant is that all these passages, in which the royal anointed one is called God's son, are in post-biblical Judaism interpreted messianically (for 2 Sam. 7:14ff. -cf. Gen. R. 97; for Ps. 2:7 - cf. Trg. Ps. 2:2; B. Suk. 52a; AZ 3b; Mid. Ps. 2:9; ARN^b 268 [Saldarini]; for Ps. 89:26f. - cf. Gen. R. 97; Ex. R. 19:7; Num. R. 13:14; Pes. R. 36:1; for Ps. 80:15 [MT 16] - cf. Trg. Ps. 80:15; Huntress, 120f.). Also significant is the Trg. Isa. 9:6 which calls the son of *unto us a son is given* 'Mighty God,

Continuing for ever, The Messiah'.

Jeremias acknowledges that there are a few occurrences of the designation of the Messiah as Son of God in rabbinic literature but reckons that they are late compositions (Jeremias, 1954, 1963, 1972, 73 n.86). It must be admitted that the dating of rabbinic texts is a problem but for several reasons I do not think that these rabbinic texts which designate the Messiah as 'Son of God' can be dismissed so easily because the compositions in which they appear were late compared to the NT. Firstly, as we shall see further on when we discuss the Dead Sea scrolls, the idea of the Messiah as 'Son of God' existed at Qumran and not least the messianic interpretation of 2 Sam. 7:11ff. (cf. 4QFlor 11, 12a; 1QSa 2:11-12; 4Q246 2:1-9). There seems a high probability that Ps. 2:7 is conflated with 2 Sam. 7:11f. in 4QFlor 11, 12a (cf. Hurst, 1990, 63; Vermes, 1973, 1983, 198). This is significant, for though Fitzmyer claims, 'Not even Ps. 2:7 is to be understood as "messianic" in pre-Christian times' (Fitzmyer, 1992, 112), elsewhere he claims that Ps. 2 echoes the dynastic covenant of Nathan's oracle in 2 Sam. 7:8-14 (cf. Fitzmyer, 1963, 307). Moreover, it appears that Ps. 2:7 was used at Qumran as a messianic prophecy (cf. 1QSa 2:11-12; Hamerton-Kelly, 1973, 245). If I am correct, then we have not only a messianic interpretation of the Son in 2 Sam. 7:11ff. but also of the Son in Ps. 2:7 at Qumran as well as in Rabbinic Judaism. Hebrews also connects the two passages messianically in 1:5.

Secondly, while the Targum to Psalms probably dates from the

Talmudic period there are indications that an Aramaic translation of the psalms, similar to our present Targum, was in existence at the time the NT was composed. Levey argues that the Targum to Psalms (though not identical with the extant Targum) was in existence in the first half of the first century AD on the assumption that it had a common origin with the Targum to Job (cf. JE 12.62), and the latter had a ban placed on it by Gamaliel I (the Gamaliel of Acts 5:34ff.) (cf. B. Shab. 115a; Levey, 159 n.1; Moloney, 1980-81, 660).

It once happened that my father Ḥalafta visited R. Gamaliel Berabbi at Tiberias and found him sitting at the table of Joḥanan b. Nizuf with the Targum of the Book of Job in his hand which he was reading. Said he to him, 'I remember that R. Gamaliel, your grandfather, was standing on a high eminence on the Temple Mount, when the Book of Job in a Targumic version was brought before him, whereupon he said to the builder, "Bury it under the bricks." He [R. Gamaliel II] too gave orders, and they hid it.'¹

(B. Shab. 115a)

Significantly, the Targum to the Psalms applies Ps. 2:2 to the Messiah and interprets the son in Ps. 80:15 [MT 16] ('and the son [עַל-בֶּן] that you made strong for yourself') as 'the king Messiah' possibly under the

¹ 'The spread of works inimical to Judaism, both through the rise of Christianity and false claimants to Messiahship, caused the Rabbis to frown upon books other than those admitted to the Holy Scriptures, even such as were not actually inimical thereto' (B. Shab. 115a, n. c3). Also, Moloney believes that there is clear evidence that the Regia version of the Targum to Psalms was carefully edited to eliminate all the individual messianic and eschatological references, and the text has been continually brought back into line with the Hebrew and believes that traces of the earliest interpretation still remain in the Walton version. The practice of ridding Jewish works of anything helpful to the Christian argument is, according to Moloney well known, being witnessed to as early as Justin Martyr (*Trypho* 71-73) and by Origen (*Contra Celsum* I, 51) (cf. Moloney, 1980-81, 667).

influence of Ps. 2 (cf. Huntress, 121). Moreover, several scholars believe that Ps. 2:7 is quoted in the messianic passage of Pss. Sol. 17:23-31¹ (cf. *ibid.* 120f.; Bruce, 1964, 12).

Thirdly, given the polemic and the continuing antipathy between Christianity and Judaism,² the equating of the Messiah with the Son of God must have been well established; it is just inconceivable that Judaism would develop this concept at a time when it would support Christianity's interpretation of Scripture. The probability is that such rabbinic texts were earlier rather than later and probably pre-AD 70. Much more consistent with the post-AD 70 era are those texts which plainly reject the idea that God could have a Son (cf. Ex. R. 20:10; 29:5; Dt. R. 2:33; SS R. 7.9.1; also Mid. Ps. 149:1; B. Sanh. 95b; Dt. R. 1:12). Lohse reckons that 'Since the Synagogue had to react sharply to the Chr[istian] doctrine of the divine sonship of Jesus Christ, a Messianic interpretation of 2 S. 7:14 was no longer possible' (Lohse, *TDNT* 8:362). Origen is critical of Celsus for attributing to a Jew the words '*My prophet said once in Jerusalem that God's son would come to judge the holy and to punish the righteous*' claiming that no Jew would confess such a statement (*Contra Celsum*

¹ Bruce claims a middle of the first century BC composition for this work (cf. Bruce, 1964, 12).

² This is evidenced by the 12th benediction of the Tefillah, *birkath ha-minim*, which was framed by Samuel the Small at the request of Gamaliel II of Jebneh who succeeded Johanan b. Zakkai as *nasi* (chief, ruler, prince) c. AD 80 (cf. B. Ber. 28b-29a; EJ 7:296; Horbury, 1982, 19ff.), and by Justin Martyr's testimony of the Jews' cursing of Christians and the Messiah (cf. Dial. 16, 93, 95, 96, 108, 123, 133).

1:49). Origen's appraisal may have been correct for his era of late 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD but it is probable that there was such a Jewish belief in the 1st centuries BC and AD. It seems likely that there was a deliberate suppression and elimination by the rabbis of the title 'Son of God' from Messianic expectation in order to reduce the importance of this designation. I wish to argue that these messianic interpretations of 2 Sam 7, Pss. 2, 80, 89 and Isa. 9:6 point to a common Jewish background for the application of the title 'Son of God' to the Messiah.

Qumran

The Dead Sea Scrolls from the eleven caves at Qumran have been hailed by W. F. Albright as 'the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times' (cf. Fitzmyer, 1992, 2). As the work of piecing together the thousands of scroll fragments from Qumran's Fourth cave (4Q) continues,¹ further evidence is being brought to light regarding the messianic expectations of the Qumran Sect. However, as early as 1961 the opinion of Frank Moore Cross was reported by Arthur Darby Nock that 'there is further evidence forthcoming from Qumran for the use of royal ideology, expressing the Messiah's relation to God in terms of sonship'.²

¹ At least 15,000 fragments were gathered from the debris in Cave 4 (cf. Fitzmyer, 1992, 3).

² A. D. Nock, review of H. -J. Schoeps, *Die Theologie des Apostels im Lichte der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte*, in *Gnomon* 33 (1961), p. 584 (cf. Collins, 1993, 67).

4QFlor 11, 12a

A notable passage, to which we have already referred, is the DSS scroll 4QFlor 10-14 which applies 2 Sam. 7:11f., 14a to the coming of the **צמח דוד** ('shoot of David'), the Qumran Davidic Messiah, as Hebrews applies it to the Son (cf. Heb. 1:5b). This work has also been called 'A Midrash on the Last Days' (cf. Knibb, 1987, 257). Knibb dates this MSS from the end of the first century BC or the beginning of the first century AD, but believes that the work itself may be older than this (ibid.).¹

**אני [א]ה[יה] לוא לאב והוא יהיה לי לבן הוא צמח דוד העומד עם דורש התורה
אשר [...] בציל[ון בא]חרית הימים**

I [will] be a father to him and he will be son to me. This is the shoot of David who will appear with the teacher of law, who [...] in Zion in the end of days.

(4QFlor 11, 12a; cf. Isa. 11:1ff.; Rom. 15:12; Allegro, 1958, 353)

Elsewhere in the Qumran texts, such as the *peshet* on Gen. 49:10, the perpetuity of this **צמח דוד** is emphasized and clearly identified with the Messiah:

**...עד בוא משיח הצדק צמח
דוד כי לו ולזרעו נתנה ברית מלכות עמו עד דורות עולם...**

...until the Messiah of Righteousness, the Shoot of David, comes, for to him and his seed is given the covenant of the kingdom of his people unto time immemorial...

(cf. 4Q252, 5:3-4; cf. also 4Q174, 1:11f.; 4Q161, 8-10:17; 4Q285; Eisenman & Wise, 87; Abegg, 88; Allegro, 1956, 175),

¹ A florilegium is an anthology; it is a collection of selected passages from the writings of previous authors (cf. Knibb, 1987, 257).

1QSa 2:11f.

One of the most important, albeit controversial, passages of the whole Qumran literature in relation to the Messiah is surely 1QSa 2:11f.

[ה]וא [זה מו]שב אנשי השם [קריאי] מועד לעצת היחד אם יוליד
[אל]א[ת] [המשיח אתם יבוא] הכהן [רואש כול עדת ישראל וכול

[The ses]sion of the men of renown [summoned to] the assembly of the council of the community, when¹ [God] shall beget the Messiah in their presence. [The Priest] shall come at the head of the whole congregation of Israel and bear...

(1QSa 2:11-12, Barthélemy's restoration)

A significant problem with this passage is its fragmentary state. However, Barthélemy's restoration does seem a reasonable one. This MSS, which Barthélemy published in 1955 in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert I*, was originally included in the same scroll as the Community Rule (1QS). He named the work 'The rule of the Congregation' but Vermes gave it a new title 'The Messianic Rule' because:

(1) it was intended for 'all the congregation in the last days'; (2) it is a Rule for a Community adapted to the requirements of the Messianic war against the nations; (3) it refers to the presence of the Priest and the Messiah of Israel at the Council, and at the meal described in column II.

(Vermes, 1962, 1975, 1987, 100)

The Rule describes the procedure at the sacred banquet which Barthélemy also maintains is eschatological in character (cf. Gordis, 191).

¹ The most common meaning of **אם** is 'if' but it can also have the meaning 'when' (cf. Gen. 38:9; Num. 21:9; Ps. 78:34; Amos 7:2; Isa. 4:4; 24:13; 28:25 (cf. DCH & BDB on **אם**)).

Vermes feels that it is safe to propose a date of mid first century BC for the scroll (cf. Vermes, 1962, 1975, 1987, 100; HJP 3:1.387). For our purposes there are two main issues in our text. First, Should יוליד [he will beget] be emended to יוליך [he will lead forth] as proposed by J. T. Milik (cf. Gordis, 192; Cross, 1956, 124 n.8)? Secondly, Does the document contain a reference to the Divine begetting of the Messiah which would be of immense importance not only for understanding the sect itself but also for its bearing on later religious development of Judaism and Christianity (cf. Gordis, 192)?

First, much, however, depends on the meaning of a word which is illegible in the photographic reproduction of the text. Despite the similarity of the words יוליך / יוליד the editor of manuscript, Barthélemy, says that a careful examination of the MSS shows the word to be יוליד [he will beget] (cf. Burrows, 300; Gordis, 191f.). Moreover, Cross and Allegro have testified that an infra-red photograph confirms this crucial word is יוליד (cf. Cross, 1956, 124 n.8; Yadin, 1959, 240; Burrows, 300; Smith, 219f.). Therefore, Gordis believes that there is 'no reason for emending the reading' (Gordis, 193). However, there still remains the problem of construing יוליד with the word אתם [with them]. Gordis notes that despite Barthélemy being convinced that יוליד is the crucial final word of line 11, 'He nonetheless proceeds to adopt the correction proposed by J. T. Milik of יוליד to יוליך, on the ground that אתם would then be easier to explain' (Gordis, 192). Cross, who checked the original and new enlarged infra-red plates to confirm the reading of יוליד, believes we should 'accept Milik's

emendation' because of the presence of אִתָּם (Cross, 1956, 124 n.8). Certainly a translation along the lines of 'he will lead the Messiah with them' seems more natural than 'he will beget the Messiah with them'. Gordis resolves the problem by taking אִתָּם as starting another clause, 'When God begets the Messiah, with them shall come the priest' (cf. Gordis, 194; Burrows, 302). The strength of this translation is that it avoids emendation but, as Burrows points out, the syntax of the sentence still seems peculiar (cf. Burrows, 302). However, I am not sure that אִתָּם must necessarily be understood as 'with them' though that is its most common meaning. The sense 'in the presence of' or 'alongside of' is well attested in the Tanak (Hebrew Bible) for אִתָּם as the recent Dictionary of Classical Hebrew makes plain (cf. Gen. 5:22, 24; 6:9; 20:16; Ex. 33:21; Lev. 26:39; 1 Sam. 25:15; Ps. 84:4; Isa. 30:8; 59:12; 66:14; Ezek. 43:8; Micah 6:1; DCH 1:451f.; BDB 86). Another sense for אִתָּם is 'without' or 'apart from' (cf. Gen. 39:6, 8; DCH 1:452), and employing this sense it is possible to translate the troublesome phrase thus, 'When he begets the Messiah apart from them'; thus showing the uniqueness of this begetting. Because the latter sense is more rare, I have used 'in the presence of' but either could be applied. These translations, at least, take serious the words in the manuscript that can be read with some degree of certainty using the best scientific methods available.

Secondly, regarding the issue of taking הַמָּשִׁיחַ as 'the Messiah', Yadin, like Morton Smith (cf. Smith, 223), argues against it believing that all those who follow Barthélemy in doing so 'encounter great difficulties' (Yadin, 1959,

238). He advocates that 'Nowhere in the DSS does the word **המשיח** occur alone, implying the existence of "a Messiah" *par excellence*. On the contrary, the word is always followed or preceded by another qualifying word or words' and that 'Such a reading is in direct opposition to the main doctrine of the sect, i.e. the coming of the two anointed chiefs' (ibid. 239). However, Cross claims that the passage does not 'dispute a two-Messiah doctrine among the sectarians' (Cross, 1956, 124 n.9; cf. Yadin, 1959, 239 n.7). Moreover, Yadin wishes to fill the lacuna preceding **המשיח** with the word **הכוהן**, thus giving the combination **הכוהן המשיח** 'the anointed priest', claiming that this combination is 'the only one in which the word **המשיח** appears in the OT at all' (ibid. 239). This understanding of the text would be all right if we could dispose of the verb **יוליד** [he will beget] at the end of the preceding line, but that is only possible if we assume a scribal error and emend the text. Yadin recognises this but finds the reading **יוליד / אל** 'difficult to square' with his understanding of the text. Therefore, he rather lamely suggests that the plates of the infra-red should be rechecked in the hope that the word may be read: **יועדו** [their meeting] (ibid. 240).

Barthélemy, in his restoration of the MSS, inserts **אל** 'God' as the subject of the verb **יוליד** and after it a particle **א[ת]** with indications that the next word **המשיח** 'the Messiah' is the object. Thus God begets the Messiah. If the verb **יוליד** is retained, as the latest scientific evidence indicates that it should be, the subject must surely be 'God' and the object 'the Messiah' (cf Burrows, 303).

It is highly probable that we have an allusion here to the ^{begetting} begetting of the Son of Ps. 2:7 which is being interpreted in pre-Christian times messianically as it is in Rabbinic Judaism (cf. B. Suk. 52a; Mid. Ps. 2:9; Trg. Ps. 2:2; also LXX Ps. 109:3 [MT 110]). Vermes referring to our Qumran text says, 'Clearly, the phrase as it stands - 'when [God] shall beget the Messiah' - is meaningless unless the begetting of the Messiah was an established metaphor for the public appointment of Israel's royal saviour' and though Vermes doubts the existence of the evidence to bear this out, he admits, 'apart from its prototype - "You are my son, today I have begotten you" - Ps. 2:7 (RSV), the Qumran expression is a unique example' (Vermes, 1973, 1983, 198f.). No doubt the word יוליד ('beget') is used in the same sense as Ps. 2:7, and as Burrows says, 'No other kind of reference to begetting is credible in the context of a series of directions for the community's meetings "in the last days"' (Burrows, 303).

4Q246

Though no complete scroll was found in Cave 4 at Qumran, it has in Fitzmyer's opinion 'turned out to be the most important cave of all' (Fitzmyer, 1992, 23). Certainly, at least for this thesis, among the previously unknown texts which have come to light at Qumran, none is more striking and fascinating than the Messianic pseudo-Daniel Fragments in Aramaic 4Q246 which applies the titles 'Son of God' and 'Son of the Most High' to a mysterious personage. Milik dates the scroll on palaeographical grounds to the last third of First Century BC, and in this fact lies the scroll's crucial importance for the

purpose of this chapter (cf. Fitzmyer, 1979, 91). Interest in this scroll has been heightened also by its delay in publication. It was acquired in 1958 and entrusted to the care of J. T. Milik who presented it in a lecture at Harvard University in 1972.¹ The fragment consists of two columns of nine lines each; column one is torn vertically, so that a third to a half of each line is missing, but column two, which I give below, is substantially intact.

- (1) ברה די אל יתאמר ובר עליון יקרונה כזיקא
- (2) די חזיתא כן מלכותה תהוא שני[ן] ימלכו על
- (3) ארעא וכלא ידשוון עם לעם ידוש ומדינה למדינה
- (4) עד יקום עם אל וכלא יניח מן חרב
- (5) מלכותה מלכות עלם וכול ארחתה בקשוט יד[ו]ן
- (6) ארעא בקשט וכלא יעבד שלם חרב מן ארעא יסף
- (7) וכל מדינתא לה יסגדון אל רבא באילה
- (8) הוא יעבד לה קרב עממין ינתן בידה כלהן
- (9) ירמה קדמוהי שלטנה שלטן עלם וכל תהומי

(1) He will be called the son of God; they will call him son of the Most High. Like the shooting stars (2) that you saw, thus will be their Kingdom. They will rule for a given period of year[s] upon (3) the earth, and crush everyone. People will crush people, and nation (will crush) nation, (4) until the people of God arises and causes everyone to rest from the sword. (5) His Kingdom will be an Eternal Kingdom, and he will be Righteous in all his Ways. He [will jud]ge (6) the earth in Righteousness, and everyone will make peace. The sword shall cease from the earth, (7) and every nation will bow down to him. As for the Great God, with His help (8) he will make war, and He will give all the peoples into his power; all of them (9) He will throw down before him. His rule will be an Eternal rule, and all the boundaries...

(4Q246 2:1-9; cf. Eisenman & Wise, 70f.)

Column one of the fragment reflects someone falling before the throne

¹ It has now been now finally been published by Emil Puech in the centenary volume of *Revue Biblique* (E. Puech 'Fragment d'une apocalypse en Araméen [4Q246 = psDan^d] et le "Royaume de Dieu"', RB 99 (1992) 98-131] (cf. Collins, 1993, 65 n.4).

of a king and announces to him imminent evils, among which reference is made to the 'King of Assyria' and to 'Egypt' (1:1-6). However, the focus of the fragment appears to centre on the mysterious personage to whom the titles 'Son of God' and 'Son of the Most High' are applied (2:1) (cf. Garcia Martinez, 163ff.; Collins, 1993, 66). Hengel has noted the possibility of a collective interpretation of this mysterious personage in terms of the Jewish people (cf. Hengel, 43) but it appears that no one has actually argued for such an interpretation (cf. Collins, 1993, 69). There are, however, four hypotheses to date concerning this mysterious figure.

The Historical Hypothesis

Although Milik has not as yet published his interpretation of the fragment, his view in 1972 can be ascertained through his lecture at Harvard as reported by Fitzmyer (cf. Fitzmyer, 1979, 92f.). Milik interpreted the scroll as far as col. 2:4 in a historical sense, identifying the mysterious personage as Alexander Balas, one of the Seleucid rulers of Syria and Palestine (150-145 BC), the son of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, successor to Demetrius I Soter, and the one who bestowed the high priesthood on Jonathan (cf. Jos. Ant. 13:35-45; *ibid.*). Milik explains the titles 'Son of God' 'Son of the Most High' as applicable to Alexander Balas because his coins identify him as θεοπάτωρ or *Deo patre natus*, and as an Alexander, he is 'named' by the name of the great king [Alexander the Great]. To achieve this interpretation Milik restored the last line of col. 1 in, what Fitzmyer calls, 'a most crucial way' and thus introduces the notion of διάδοχος and the 'Great King' (cf. Fitzmyer, 1979, 92; Garcia

Martinez, 168f.; Collins, 1993, 67).

There are, however, a number of weaknesses with this hypothesis. First, there is no textual basis for introducing the mention of the 'Great King' and the idea of 'succession' (cf. Garcia Martinez, 169). Secondly, the hypothesis fails to take account of the apocalyptic language and imagery with which this intriguing scroll is replete (cf. *ibid.* 173; Fitzmyer, 1979, 93). Thirdly, the reference to the King of Assyria and Egypt are probably examples of kingdoms which are so fleeting and transitory, they can only be compared to 'shooting stars' (col. 2:1). In contrast to that of the mysterious figure whose 'rule will be an Eternal rule' (col. 2:9). Fourthly, this interpretation has no other followers to date (cf. Collins, 1993, 67).

The Antichrist and Communal Hypothesis

Flusser, observing the *vacat* at the beginning of col. 2:4, interprets the col 2 of the text in two parts. Everything preceding col. 2:4 'is a description of eschatological evils and of the shortlived rule of a wicked kingdom' while col. 2:4 marks the turning point in the eschatological drama with the rise of 'the people of God' (Flusser, 1988, 211). Though Flusser affirms the apocalyptic nature of the fragment, 'the hero of the period of redemption is not a Messiah, but Israel, the people of God who will then be the guarantor of world peace' (*ibid.* 212). Unlike Milik, Flusser does not apply the titles to a historical figure, but to the Antichrist, as he says, 'the man, described in the fragment can be only the king or the leader of' a 'wicked' 'horrible kingdom', and the text for him 'is important evidence for a Jewish tradition about the superhuman hubris

of the Antichrist' (ibid. 209). Vermes offers a similar two part interpretation of the text as Flusser viewing the indentation of col. 2:4 as starting a new paragraph when 'a new protagonist emerges, "the people of God"' (Vermes, 1992, 303). Like Flusser, Vermes asserts 'that the personality, introduced at the end of col. i and described in the first three lines of col. ii as "son of God" and "son of the Most High", is the last ruler of the final world empire, and as such perhaps not Flusser's Antichrist, but a usurper of the 'son of God' title. His reign is characterized by warfare among the nations' (Vermes, 1992, 303).

Flusser argues that the idea of an Antichrist is Jewish and pre-Christian. He arrived at this conclusion on the basis of the parallel existing between the fragment and other classical texts that contain a similar tradition concerning this apocalyptic adversary, the Antichrist, such as 2 Thes. 2:1-12, Rev. 13:8-12, the *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:2-16, the *Didache* 16:4 and above all, the *Oracle of Hytaspes* 17:2-4 (cf. Flusser, 1988, 209ff.). Garcia Martinez and Collins are both critical of Flusser's identification of the mysterious figure with the Antichrist because his solution ignores the obvious Christian elements of the texts used (cf. Garcia Martinez, 171f.; Collins, 1993, 68f.). The *Oracle of Hytaspes* is only known in so far as it is cited by Lactantius in the *Divine Institutiones* VII, and the extent of the citations and their ultimate provenance is in dispute; a number of scholars think it is a Persian-Hellenistic oracle. In any case, both Garcia Martinez and Collins claim that the passage cited reflects a NT influence (ibid.). However, this criticism is weakened somewhat by the fact that the background to this apocalyptic adversary lies in Jewish eschatology

where the ideas of the wicked king of the last generation and of the rise of evil to an all-time high in the last days are found at an early period (cf. Ezek. 28:2; Dan. 7:24f.; 11:36; also 9:27; Ass. Mos. 8; 10:1-2; 4 Ezra 5:6; 2 Bar. 40:1-3; Sib. Or. 5:28ff.; T. Dan. 6:1-4). Beliar attained to personality in 2nd century BC and ruled over souls (cf. T. Dan. 4:7; 5:1; Jubilees 1:20) and on him the Messiah makes war (cf. T. Dan. 5:10), binds ^{him} (cf. T. Levi 18:12) and casts ^{him} into the fire (cf. T. Jud. 25:3). Another form of the same idea can be found in the eschatological battle in which the forces of evil and their leader are finally overcome (cf. 1QM 18:1; 1QS 4:18f. T. Lev. 3:3). In fact, concerning the Antichrist, the Encyclopedia Judaica reckons that 'this eschatological figure may have been more highly developed and earlier than is generally recognized, as the primarily Jewish material in the fragmentary Coptic Elijah apocalypse indicates' (EJ 3:62).¹

In spite of this Jewish background to this eschatological adversary, the identification of the mysterious figure of our text with the Antichrist seems speculative; the language here just does not admit a negative interpretation. Both Collins and Garcia Martinez point out that there are plenty of Jewish texts at Qumran and in other Jewish literature which refer to an eschatological adversary, but the figure in question is always portrayed in negative terms in these writings (cf. Collins, 1993, 68f.; Garcia Martinez, 178). Moreover, Collins

¹ Gunkel (*Schöpfung und Chaos*, 13) and Bousset believe that the 'Antichrist legend is nothing less than a later anthropomorphic transformation of the Babylonian Dragon myth' (Bousset, 1896, xii, 13f.).

maintains, 'The idea of an Antichrist, however, who mimics the titles and power of Christ, the Messiah, is only found in Christian texts, and cannot safely be inferred from this Qumran Fragment' (Collins, 1993, 68f.).

The interpretations of both Flusser and Vermes depend on the significance they attribute to the *vacat* at the beginning of col. 2:4. However, I am wary of attaching any significance to this indentation or its position since a brief scan through the scrolls printed in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* by Eisenman and Wise show *vacats* occurring in various positions in a line in many texts (cf. 4Q521; 4Q471; 4Q534-536; 4Q554; 4Q385-389; 4Q243-245; 4Q547; *et passim*; Eisenman & Wise, 21ff.; 31; 35; 41f.; 61f.; 67). Collins notes the *vacat* but appears to give no significance to it (cf. Collins, 1973, 66). Moreover, for one's whole interpretation to depend on a blank space, which in this case happens to be at the beginning of a line, seems precarious, to say the least. Also, a major problem of interpretation is introduced by the employment of the third masculine suffix in the lines which follow the rise of the people of God. In principle the suffix could refer back to either the mysterious figure, the Son of God (i.e. 'His Kingdom will be an Eternal Kingdom'), or to the people of God (i.e. 'its kingdom will be an eternal kingdom'). But, as Collins says, 'the people is an unlikely antecedent for the statement 'he will judge with truth' (Collins, 1993, 71), since 'there is no parallel for the notion that the people, collectively, will judge the earth' (ibid. 1993, 74), and in the Tanak it is the Lord who is judge of the earth (cf. Gen. 18:25; 1 Sam. 2:10; Pss. 7:11; 9:8; 82:8; 96:13; 98:9; 110:6; etc.).

The Angel Hypothesis

Like Flusser, Garcia Martinez recognises the apocalyptic character of the fragment, but unlike Flusser he recognises the positive character of the mysterious figure's portrayal. However, he interprets the fragment in light of other DSS, primarily 11QMelch and the War Scroll and identifies the 'Son of God' 'as Michael, Melchizedek, Prince of Light' (cf. Garcia Martinez, 178). Certainly, 11QMelch provides an instance where the divine judgment is executed by someone other than the Most High. Also, there are some points of contact between 4Q246 and the War Scroll: God Himself fights for Israel (cf. 1QM 11); He appointed 'the Prince of Light...from ancient times to come to our support' (1QM 13:10; cf. Vermes, 1962, 1975, 1987, 119); 'He will send eternal succour to the company of His redeemed by the might of the princely Angel of the kingdom of Michael....He will raise up the kingdom of Michael in the midst of the gods, and the realm of Israel in the midst of all flesh' (1QM 17:6ff.; Vermes *ibid.* 122).

However, this angelic interpretation of 4Q246 also has significant weaknesses that undermine it as a realistic interpretation. First, the identification of Melchizedek with the archangel Michael is still a controversial issue as there is no such identification in the 11QMelch scroll itself or elsewhere for that matter. Secondly, though the analogies between 4Q246 and the War Scroll lend some support to Garcia Martinez's hypothesis, it is not decisive since a place for a messianic

figure can also be found in the War Scroll. Mention is made of 'the Prince of all the congregation' (1QM 5:1) and in 1QM 11 Balaam's oracle of Num. 24:17-19 is cited, '*A star shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel...*' No interpretation is applied to this passage in the War Scroll but the same passage is cited in the Damascus Document where 'The sceptre is the Prince of the whole congregation' (CD 7:18-21; cf. 1QSb 5). Moreover, 4Q285 clearly identifies the 'Prince of the Congregation' with the 'Shoot of David' by the way the titles are juxtaposed:

[צמח דויד ונשפטו את]
[והמיתו נשיא העדה צמח דויד]

...the Shoot of David and he will enter into controversy with...
 ...they shall put to death the Prince of the Congregation, the Shoot of David...
 (4Q285 7:3f.; cf. Eisenman & Wise, 24ff.; Abegg, 87f.; Collins, 1993, 79)

Num. 24:17 is also given a messianic interpretation in the Targums (cf. Trgs. Onk. & Ps. Jon. on Num. 24:17), by R. Akiba (c. AD 50-135) (cf. P. Taan 4:5.10), and also in the T. Judah where it is said of this messianic figure, 'This is the Shoot of God Most High; this is the fountain for the life of all humanity' (T. Judah 24:1-4; cf. T. Levi 18:3f.). Thirdly, despite the number of names by which principal angels are known at Qumran, the title 'Son of God' is not one of them (cf. Collins, 1993, 75f.). Fourthly, if the third person suffix refers to the 'Son of God' figure it does seem strange that God should be said to be the 'help' of an angel and to fight on his behalf (cf. col. 2:7-8). Normally, the angel is

God's agent in supporting His people (cf. Collins, 1993, 76).

The Messianic Hypothesis

Collins offers a messianic interpretation based mainly on the correspondence which he finds between 4Q246 and the Book of Daniel, particularly ch. 7. There are a number of factors which suggest to Collins that there is a relationship between our text and the Daniel literature (Collins, 1993, 69ff.). Most of 4Q246 fragment appears to be an interpretation of a vision of a king, interpreted by someone else, who falls down before the throne in the opening verse of col. 1. The conflict between the nations in col. 1 of our text is also reminiscent in a general way of Dan. 2. Some common terminology and a number of points of contact ^{are} ~~is~~ observed between 4Q246 and Daniel: the clearest being at 4Q246 2:5, 'His Kingdom will be an Eternal Kingdom' (cf. Dan. 4:3 & 7:27), and at 4Q246 2:9 'His rule will be an Eternal rule' (cf. Dan. 7:14). A parallelism appears to exist in the relationship that exists between the 'Son of God' and the people of God in our text and between the 'Son of Man' figure and the people of God in Daniel. In Daniel, the eternal kingdom is given to both the 'Son of Man' and the saints (cf. Dan 7:14, 18, 27). Therefore, Collins says:

A king can stand for a kingdom, and a representative individual can stand for a people. The ambiguity of the third person suffixes in col. 2 of our Qumran fragment can be explained most satisfactorily if the one who is called 'Son of God' is understood as the ruler or representative of the people of God. The everlasting kingdom, then, belongs to both, and the 'Son of God' exercises universal judgment on behalf of his people.

(Collins, 1993, 71)

In light of these analogies, Collins thinks that 4Q246 may represent 'an

early interpretation of the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7, who also stands in parallelism to the people' and that 'it is difficult to avoid the impression that the author had Daniel's figure in mind' (ibid. 71f., 81)

The messianic interpretation of 4Q246 appears to me to be the most reasonable and realistic of the interpretations considered for several reasons. First, it takes account of the positive application of the titles, and the apocalyptic and redemptive themes of the scroll. Secondly, it takes account of the wider role of judgment (a royal function [cf. Ps. 72:1f.]) which will be given to the ideal future king (cf. Isa. 11:4; Ps. Sol. 17:29). Thirdly, Collins is not alone in interpreting the text messianically. Fitzmyer believes that the mysterious personage described in the fragment is an apocalyptic Davidic heir (Fitzmyer, 1979, 92ff.). Although Fitzmyer refrains from using messianic terminology, I agree with Collins that his interpretation would be classified as messianic by most scholars (cf. Collins, 1993, 67). Though he follows Fitzmyer, Seyoon Kim has no such reservations about calling the fragment messianic and thinks that:

...the text may be interpreting Dan 7.13 in terms of the tradition of 2 Sam 7.12ff. and the heavenly figure "like a son of man" in terms of the messiah, the end-time Davidic king who is to be made God's son. This seems to be made plausible by another document from the same cave of Qumran, namely 4QFlor 1.1-13, which proves that the tradition of 2 Sam 7.12ff. was alive in the Qumran community.

(Kim, 22, cf. also n.33)

Puech also allows a messianic interpretation.¹ Fourthly, as we have

¹ E. Puech, 'Fragment d'une apocalypse en Araméen (4Q246=ps Dan^d) et le "Royaume de Dieu"', RB 99 (1992) 127 (cf. Collins, 1993, 67).

shown above there are messianic points of contact between 4Q246 and the War Scroll, not to mention 4QFlor and 1QSa. Fifthly, a messianic interpretation would help explain the remarkable correspondences between this fragment and the infancy narrative of Luke (*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High* [Lk. 1:32]; and *he shall be called the Son of God* [Lk. 1:35]). Fitzmyer finds this parallelism between the fragment and Luke ^{'tantalizing'} ~~'tantalizing'~~ (Fitzmyer, 1979, 93). Collins, while recognising the fragmentary state of the text, thinks 'The correspondence with Luke might be taken as *prima facie* evidence for a messianic interpretation' (Collins, 1993, 67, 80). Sixthly, though of course, there are many differences between Daniel and 4Q246, the analogies between them as ^{outlined} ~~outlined~~ by Collins is significant. Puech thinks that both 4Q246 and Daniel were roughly contemporary and speaks of the proximity of theme and language between them.¹ If the War Scroll can make extensive use of Daniel,² it does not seem so strange that the author of 4Q246 should be influenced by it. If Collins is right in identifying a parallelism between the 'Son of God' in our text and the 'Son of Man' figure of Dan. 7:13f. then we have 'a promising key to the text' (Collins, 1993, 72, 81f.).³ Scholars have been sharply divided as to what the parallelism between 'one like a Son of

¹ Ibid. RB 99 (1992) 129 (cf. Collins, 1973, 70).

² A. Mertens, *Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer* (Echter Verlag, Stuttgart 1971, p. 79) (cf. Collins, 1993, 72 n.2).

³ Vermes believes that 'the eschatological peace-making role assigned to **עם אל** [col. 2:4] may constitute the earliest non-biblical evidence for the collective understanding of "one like a son of man" (**כבר אנוש**) of Dan. 7:13' (Vermes, 1992, 303).

Man' and the people of God entails. Rowland identifies the 'Son of Man' as the archangel Michael (cf. Rowland, 1982, 182). The messianic interpretation of Dan. 7:13f. has fallen out of favour this century and it would appear that the collective interpretation which views the 'Son of Man' figure as 'a symbol of the Saints of the Most High' is the most generally accepted today (cf. Casey, 1991, 164; Morgenstern, 65). However, this interpretation is a complete rejection of the messianic one that has been dominant in both Jewish and Christian traditions. It is this messianic interpretation that was current in the Jewish pseudepigraphic writings of the late second and first centuries BC and the first and second centuries AD. It can be found in such diverse sources as I Enoch 46:1-3; 47:3; 62:2ff.; 71:14; the Sibylline Oracles 5:414-19, 32-33; 4 Ezra 13; R. Akiba's view (cf. B. Hag. 14a; Sanh. 38b) and a number of rabbinic texts interpreting Dan. 7 directly as messianic (cf. Num. R. 13:14; Mid. Ps. 2:9; B. Sanh. 98a); Trypho's statement in Justin's *Dialogue* 32, and Ezekiel the Tragedian's *Exagoge* (lines 68-89). The weight of evidence favours an existing messianic tradition of Dan. 7 before the Christian era (cf. Moloney, 1980, 280ff.; Horbury, 1985, 34-55; Emerton, 1958, 225ff.; Hurtado, 1988, 54; Collins, 1993, 81; Morgenstern, 65). A number of these sources, such as the *Similitudes of Enoch* and 4 Ezra 13, assume that the 'Son of Man' figure is pre-existent and so transcendent in some sense. If our author of 4Q246 had the 'Son of Man' figure in mind, as Collins believes, then it is reasonable to assume that he had a transcendent and pre-existent messianic figure in mind and it was only a small step to apply the titles 'Son of God' and 'Son of the Most High' to

him.

Therefore, I conclude, that in the DSS fragment 4Q246 we have one of the clearest and so probably one of the most important Qumran evidences of a pre-Christian application of the title 'Son of God' to the Messiah in Palestinian Judaism.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the Epistle to the Hebrews is, at least, more pastoral and theological than polemic. It is not the author's purpose to belittle the prophets nor to indicate that the OT revelation made known by them was unworthy of God. Hebrews assumes that it was the same God who spoke in the past by the prophets and now in His Son; the prophets were God's agents in the old dispensation. The author uses the antitheses in the Letter as a sort of foil for the superiority of person, work and revelation of the unique Son of God. Right at the beginning of Hebrews, the author sets the tone for the whole Letter by distinguishing the Messiah from the prophets as the 'Son'.

The messianic interpretations of 2 Sam 7:14; Pss. 2:7; 80:15 [MT 16]; 89:26f. and Isa. 9:6 in rabbinic literature support a high probability that 'Son of God' was a messianic title in Palestinian ^{Judaism} ~~Judiam~~. But the important Qumran texts, 4 QFlor 11-14, 1QSa 2:11-12 and especially 4Q246 show that the application of the title 'Son of God' to the Messiah did not originate in Christianity, but that it was already at home in at least one form of Judaism in Palestine at the turn of the era.

For the author of Hebrews, the Son's mission and High Priesthood

rests on his unique relationship and oneness with the Father (cf. 1:8; 2:10f.; 3:6; 4:14; 7:28). By his entry into the world, the Son of God has initiated a completely new era, superseding the old order of existence which for the writer of Hebrews was ready to 'vanish away' (cf. Heb. 8:13). The ultimate relationship has become the medium of the ultimate communication of God's self-revelation. The Son, for our author, is the ultimate, decisive, complete and final revelation of God. The Messiah, for Hebrews, is the unique Son of God, the wholly valid revelation of the transcendent reality of God.

CHAPTER TWO

THE APPOINTED AND EXALTED SON

ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων,
 δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας [1:2b]
 φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ,
 καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος
 ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, [1:3b-d]

This passage brings before us one of the most difficult problems of Hebrews' christology, namely the relationship of the language of 'pre-existence' and that of 'appointment'. The issue confronting us in this chapter and the next is, Did the Son become Son or was he always the Son? If he was always the Son, how could he be appointed Son? The prime objective of this chapter is to show that the adoptionist, kenotic and contradictionist solutions are less than adequate in resolving this christological problem of Hebrews.

The Adoptionist Solution

For many scholars, the solution lies in seeing Jesus as being appointed Messiah and endowed with the power of God not through real pre-existence but through the act of adoption. While recognising that Hebrews 'stresses the eternal pre-existence (and of course post-existence) of Christ more than any other New Testament writer' (Robinson, 157), Robinson lists a number of passages in Hebrews which he claims supports an adoptionist solution (e.g. 1:4, 9, 10, 13; 2:9, 12f. 16; 3:2f.; 5:1-6, 8, 10; 6:20; 7:28), and in particular, he

focuses on Heb. 1:2b. He says of Heb. 1:1-3:

...in the midst of all this pre-existence language we get the apparently 'adoptionist' term 'made heir'. And this is characteristic of the whole Epistle. Nowhere, in fact, in the New Testament more than in Hebrews do we find such a wealth of expressions that would support what looks like an adoptionist Christology - of a Jesus who becomes the Christ.

(Robinson, 1973, 156)

Hurst says of Hebrews that 'the author's *main* interest was not in a uniquely privileged, divine being who becomes man; it is in a human figure who attains to an exalted status' (Hurst, 1987, 163). Dunn claims that 'there is more "adoptionist" language in Hebrews than in any other NT document', but he acknowledges that Hebrews describes the Messiah as God's Son in terms that seem to denote pre-existence (Dunn, 1980, 1989, 52). However, Dunn also says, 'The one real attempt within the NT to hold together the christology of eschatological sonship and the christology of pre-existent sonship (Hebrews) does not wholly come off and leaves the two strands only loosely interwoven' (ibid. 62). He sees the pre-existent language of Hebrews as reflecting to some degree his use of Platonic cosmology which is interpreted with cross-reference to the Philonic treatment of the Logos. Dunn argues that the author 'ultimately has in mind an ideal pre-existence', but it is a pre-existence, which exists more as 'an idea and purpose in the mind of God than of a personal divine being' (ibid. 54, 56).

Dunn's adoptionist solution to Hebrews' christological problem is interesting as he attempts to take some account of the pre-existent language. The idea that the Messiah existed only in the mind of God before creation has

some support in rabbinic literature, where a distinction is made between real pre-existence and ideal pre-existence and the name of the Messiah is included among the things that were planned to be created and not among the things that were actually created (cf. Gen. R. 1:4; Mid. Ps. 93:3; Pes. R. 33:6; 36:1). However, there is also considerable tension within Judaism on this issue. In the same text which speaks of God's contemplation of the Messiah and his works before the world was created, it can speak of the Messiah being hidden until the time of his appearance and of Satan being invited to see him, 'And when he saw him, Satan was shaken, and he fell upon his face and said: Surely, this is the Messiah who will cause me and all the counterparts in heaven of the princes of the earth's nations to be swallowed up in Gehenna' (Pes. R. 36:1). In addition to such texts that merely mention the pre-existent name of the Messiah before creation (cf. B. Ned. 39b; Pes. 54a; Mid. Ps. 72:6; Trgs. Mic. 5:2; Zech. 4:7), there are a number of texts that refer to or imply a real pre-existence of the Messiah (cf. B. Sanh. 98a; Gen. R. 2:4; Lev. R. 14:1; Num. R. 13:2; Pes. R. 31:10; 33:6; 34:2; Trgs. S.S. 8:1; Mic. 4:8; Zech. 4:7; 4 Ezra 7:28f.; 12:31f.; 1 En. 48:2f.). Several of the sources which enumerate six or four things that preceded the creation of the world, 'the name of the Messiah' occurs. Louis Ginzberg¹ regards the reference to 'the name of the Messiah' instead of the 'Messiah' as an intentional change for anti-Christian polemical reasons. Also Urbach reckons that, on account of the identification of the Spirit of God that 'hovered over the

¹ 'Šeride Tanhuma-Yelammedenu', *Qoves 'al Yad*, Book 4:9 (cf. Urbach, 684).

face of the waters' (Gen. 1:2) with the spirit of the Messiah (cf. Gen. R. 2:4; Lev. R. 14:1; Pes. R. 33:6), 'there are no grounds, therefore, for the distinction between the "pre-existence" of his name and the "pre-existence" of his personality' (cf. Urbach, 684f.).

I am not convinced that such statements concerning the Son being appointed heir and exalted must necessarily be understood as adoptionist language. The most significant weakness of the adoptionist solution is that it fails to take full account of the ^{pre-existence}~~pre-existent~~ language in Hebrews. The writer speaks of the Son as pre-existent in some of the strongest terms in the NT. The same person who was appointed heir and who was exalted to sit down at God's right hand after effecting redemption is depicted by the author as being in converse with God in his pre-existence concerning the body that has been prepared for him (cf. Heb. 10:5-10). Moreover, the writer portrayed the Son as being over, and the builder of, God's household of which Moses was a member (3:1-6), so that it would appear that a redeemed household, of which the Messiah was the builder, was already in existence before his exaltation. In addition, Hebrews can speak of Moses as 'esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt' (11:26), which seems to imply some personal knowledge of the Messiah. In many of the psalms cited, not least of which, the enthronement songs of Pss. 2 and 110, the author assumed that it was the Messiah who was being addressed. The Messiah is also pictured as calling God's people his brethren before his incarnation (cf. Heb. 2:12). There would certainly seem to be some tension in Hebrews which cannot be explained

away as being merely figures of speech.

In particular, the author speaks of the Messiah as being instrumental in Creation (Heb.1:2, 10ff.; 2:10). The Son is heir of all things (cf. Heb. 2:10) because he was instrumental in their creation; he was God's agent δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας. In Heb. 1:2, the author attributes to the Son what is the prerogative of the 'Word' of God in 11:3; the plural 'worlds' no doubt includes the 'world to come' as well as the present universe (cf. Heb. 2:5). But it may also reflect the Jewish belief in a number of heavens (cf. Num. R. 13:2; Heb. 7:26; 2 Cor. 12:2). The Son is effective in the creation not only of the visible universe but also the heavens, not only of the old but of the new. For the writer, the Son is the agent in the creation of *all things* (cf. Heb. 2:10) which includes תְּהוֹמֹת וְחֹשֶׁךְ וְבִהְיוֹתָם (desolation and waste and darkness, cf. Gen. 1:2) which, for some, form the basis for belief in the pre-existence and eternity of formless matter (cf. EJ 5:1063; Hughes, 1977, 443ff.; Gen. R. 1:9) and which, for others in the ancient world, were the mythological primeval forces and sea monsters that God had first to overcome before He could put His plan of creation into effect (cf. JE 4:280ff.). It is significant that Robinson makes no attempt to reconcile the 'appointment' clause with the next which indicates the Son's involvement in creation of the universe. The two must go together and neither one can be understood without the other (cf. Heb. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16). It was proper that he who made all should be Lord of all. The Son is at once both creator and heir of all things and, as such, he has a natural heirship to, and dominion over, all and not a derived one such as that of an adopted son



or as that of Christians (cf. Heb. 2:10ff.; Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 3:29-4:7).

The author of Hebrews in claiming that the Son was God's agent δι' οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας is making a daring and stupendous claim regarding the status of the Son. Wolfson argues that for Philo, 'there is nothing more exalted than the creation of the world' and that 'creation is the greatest miracle recorded in Scripture' (Wolfson, 1:298; cf. Philo, Op. 9f.). Philo reflects something of the importance that Judaism placed on Creation. The Jews believed in one God, Creator of heaven and earth. The OT commences with a majestic cosmological account of the genesis of the universe. According to Gen. 1:1-2:4a (the P account according to the documentary hypothesis) God created the world. Creation in the Pentateuch, the prophets and many of the Psalms, is a divine prerogative (cf. Gen. 5:1; Num. 16:30; Dt. 4:32; Pss. 8:3, 6; 24:1f.; 50:1; 89:47; 104:1ff.; 121:2; 136:4ff.; 148:6; Isa. 42:5; 45:12, 18; Amos 4:13; Mal. 2:10; etc.).¹ For Ben Sira (2nd cent. BC) and the Qumran covenanters God's creative works as well as His character are the motive for praising Him, and for the covenanters even that ability of man to praise God is viewed as being entirely dependent on Him (cf. Sir. 39:16-35; 42:15-43:33; 1QH 1:6-38). In 2 Enoch, commenting on His own creation narrative, God stresses His uniqueness as Creator and His total sovereignty in the heavens (cf. 2 En. 33; Nickelsburg, 1981, 186). So central was creation to Judaism, that the rabbis related it to their

¹ The belief in God as the author of creation ranks first among the thirteen fundamentals enumerated by Maimonides (cf. JE 4:336).

monotheistic faith and to their ethics (cf. Dt. R. 2:31; M. Sanh. 4:5; B. Sanh. 38a). In Rabbinic Judaism, God is *עושה בראשית* 'the author of creation' or 'He who wrought creation'¹ (cf. B. Ber. 54a; Hag. 12a; Hull. 83a; cf. also Sir. 42:15; 2 Macc. 7:28; 4 Ezra 6:38).

Realising something of the import of this attribution of creation to the agency of the Son, Socinians have argued that *τῶν αἰώνων* refers to the worlds which are to be made, not to the worlds which have been made. 'These are not, say they, the things of the old, but of the new creation; not the fabric of heaven and earth, but the conversion of the souls of men; not the first institution and forming of all things, but the restoration of mankind, and translation into a new condition of life' (Owen, 3:70f.). However, the author of Hebrews makes it plain that the Son is not only heir of all things but the agent in the creation of all things (cf. Heb. 2:10) which encompasses the old and the new. Moreover, the Son is explicitly said to have 'laid the foundations of the earth' and the heavens to have been the work of his hands (cf. Heb. 1:10).

The impersonal solution of Lindars that this 'cosmic application of "Son"....is a personification of God's creative ability and activity as a helper, Wisdom' (Lindars, 1991, 32) seems alien, not only to the Son's creative involvement in Hebrews, but also to the very title 'Son'.² Rather, as Moffatt claims, this cosmic significance of the Son highlights the truth that 'he is not

¹ Bereshit, the first word of the Hebrew Bible became the technical term for creation (cf. B. Ber. 54a n. a1; JE 4:336).

² Hebrews never employs the term σοφία.

created but creative, under God' (Moffatt, 1). The Son is eternal, pre-existing before the existence of all else, and is not only God's organ in creation, but essentially divine as His Son. For this reason the author does not hesitate in Heb. 1:10f. to apply to the Son the words addressed to Yahweh in Ps. 102:25ff. (see ch. 5). Moreover, this portrayal of the Son's creative activity in his pre-existence stands over against Dunn's view of him as an 'ideal pre-existence' existing more as 'an idea and purpose in the mind of God than of a personal divine being' (Dunn, 1980, 1989, 54, 56).

This claim that the Son pre-exists *all* things stands over against Greek mythology which starts with heaven and earth already in existence (cf. Lewis, 68). Moreover, this teaching on creation in Hebrews reflects God's relationship to the world. ^{*The doctrine*} ~~In~~ that He is its Creator, ^{*so that*} it is full of manifestations of His glory (cf. Ps. 19), stands in contrast to the gnostic view of creation. Saturninos is said to have taught that 'the world and all things in it were engendered by some seven of these angels' who were in turn creations of a single parent (cf. *Saturninos according to St. Irenaeus*, 1.24.1; Layton, 161). Elsewhere gnosticism speaks of the 'great demon' who 'began to order eternal realms (aeons) in the manner of the eternal realms that exist. And it ordered them only because of its power' (*First Thought in Three Forms*, 40:4, 7; Layton, 93). The cosmos for the gnostic is the very incarnation of evil; it is the product of an ignorant, arrogant Creator, a ^{*demiurge*} ~~demiurge~~, an angel or a lesser divine being who serves as an instrument of the higher powers and whom, according to

Irenaeus, Valentinus identifies with the God of Israel (cf. Pagels, 37; Layton, 279; *The Apocryphon of John*, 2.9.25-24:32; NHLE 103-112). For Hebrews, like the rabbis, there is not a hostile dualism between the cosmos and God, and so there was no need to attribute its creation to the intervention of angels. The rabbis were especially vigorous in refuting the gnostic idea that the world was created by angels. They make it abundantly clear that the angels are God's creations (cf. Gen. R. 1:3; 3:8) and it is specifically stated that 'all agree that nothing was created on the first day, that no one should say that Michael stretched out [the firmament] in the south and Gabriel in the north, and the Holy One, blessed be He, made its measurements in the center' (Tanḥ. B. Gen. 1:12, cf. EJ 5:1064). The angels were variously created on the second, or fifth days (Gen. R. 1:3; 3:8).

However, the idea of acting through someone or something in creation is Jewish. In the Targums God says: 'I stretched out the heavens by my *Memra*' (Trg. Isa. 44:24); 'I by my *Memra* made the earth, and created man upon it' (ibid. 45:12); 'by my *Memra* I founded the earth' (ibid. 48:13). In the Talmud, the *Shechinah* is attributed ^{to} with creating ^{the} ^{of} the universe in applying Neh. 9:6 to him, *Thou art the Lord, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of them worship thee* (B. BB 25a). Philo speaks of the Logos as 'the Word who is antecedent to all that has come into existence' (Mig. 6), as 'the Eternal

Word', 'the stamp' of God (Plant. 18f.), as 'the second God' and as 'the divine Logos' (Qu. in Gen. 2:62; cf. Qu. in Ex. 2:68; Som. 1:62), and as 'that Word by which also the whole universe was formed' (Sac. 8). Philo also represents the Logos as the Son of God (cf. Philo, Agr. 51; Conf. 146). Origen says that he never met a Jew who admitted that the Logos was the Son of God (cf. Origen, Contra Celsum 2:31), but he represents Celsus as indicating that there was a Jew who apparently did hold this belief (cf. *ibid.* also de Lange, 6). Thus showing that Celsus was aware of a Logos-theology. In 1915 W. Bousset published what Goodenough calls 'an amazing collection of fragments of Jewish liturgy' (Goodenough, 1969, 306),¹ bringing to light a body of liturgy in the *Apostolic Constitutions* that was in Bousset's and Goodenough's view unmistakably Jewish, albeit, from a Judaism strong Hellenised (*ibid.* 306, 324ff.). Among these fragments there is a prayer to God which strongly supports the idea that the Son of God was the λόγος and that he was an agent in Creation and above all other creations, unique and not to be classed with angels, messengers or whatever:

For Thou art Gnosis, which hath no beginning, everlasting sight, unbegotten hearing, untaught Sophia, the first by nature, alone in being, and beyond all number; who didst bring all things out of not-being (ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος) into being by Thy only Son, but didst beget Him before all ages by Thy will, Thy power, and Thy goodness, without any agency, the only Son, God the Logos, the living Sophia, the first-born of every

¹ W. Bousset: 'Eine jüdische *Gebetssammlung* im siebenten Buch der apostolischen Konstitutionen,' in *Nachrichten von der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Philologische-Historische Klasse, 1915 (1916), pp. 435-85 (cf. Goodenough, 1969, 306 n.1).

creature, the angel of Thy great counsel, and Thy High-Priest, but the King and Lord of every intellectual and sensible nature, who was before all things, by whom were all things. For Thou, O eternal God, didst make all things by Him, and through Him it is that Thou vouchsafest Thy suitable providence over the whole world; for by the very same that Thou bestowest being, didst Thou also bestow wellbeing: the God and Father of Thy only Son, who by Him didst make before all things the cherubim and the seraphim, the aeons and hosts, the powers and authorities, the principalities and thrones, the archangels and angels; and after all these, didst by Him make this visible world, and all things that are therein.

(Fragment VII. 7-8, Goodenough, 1969, 320f.)

The Son in Hebrews has a pre-existent reality and a divine role in Creation that goes infinitely beyond merely existing as saints do, albeit ideally, in the eternal counsel, purpose and election of God (cf. Eph. 1:4). This creative role of the Son significantly undermines the adoptionist solution to Hebrews' christological problem.

The Kenotic Solution

One solution to the issue of the christological problem of Hebrews which takes account of the pre-existent language is the kenotic one. This solution, which Fuller argues first appeared in Phil. 2:6-11 (cf. Fuller, 246), is basically a theory of the dual natures of Jesus, conceiving the incarnate life as an epiphany. The theory perceives the pre-existent One as laying aside his divinity in the Incarnation by an act of self-emptying or self-limiting to the conditions of a developing human experience. After his death he is exalted as Lord and Messiah. John Knox views 'the christology of Hebrews as being a "close approximation" to a pure kenoticism' (Knox, 1967, 43).

However, this solution appears to ignore the fact that the author of Hebrews assumes that, even during the Son's lifetime on earth under the

limitations of manhood, his divine activity (φέρων τε τὰ πάντα [1:3]) was not interrupted. The divine and the human natures of the Son are co-existent for Hebrews, not alternate states of being. The creative utterance which called the universe into existence requires as its complement that sustaining utterance to maintain that state of being (cf. Col. 1:17). Most commentators appear to take the demonstrative pronoun αὐτοῦ as referring to the Son without question, but Calvin believes it could be construed as referring to the Father or to the Son. However, Calvin is inclined to accept the latter 'because it is more widely received and best suits the context' (Calvin, 9). Literally it reads 'and bearing all things by the word of his power'. The reference to the creative Word of God in Heb. 11:3 would seem to support the interpretation that the Son upholds all things by the Word of the Father, that is by himself, since he is the Word. Nevertheless, I cannot exclude the interpretation in this instance that ῥῆμα may simply mean 'will'; the Son upholds the whole of creation by his will alone. Gregory of Nyssa puts it very elegantly, 'Who says what He wills to be done, and does what He wills by the very power of that command' (*Against Eunomius*, 2:6 [p. 108]). In either case whether the Son bears the universe by himself as the Word of God or by his will, the significant point is that it is the Son who does the 'bearing'.

The concept ^{expressed in} φέρων τὰ πάντα has different interpretations. Gregory of Nyssa, like Philo (cf. Quis Her. 36; Mut. 256), understands φέρειν as referring to the action of bringing things into existence

(cf. *Against Eunomius*, 2:11 [p. 121]). However, apart from this interpretation being a repetition of Heb. 1:2b, the present participle φέρων is most naturally understood as a reference to the ongoing sustaining activity of creation by the Son (cf. Col. 1:17) in contrast to Marcion who denied the Son's preserving power (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. on Heb.* 2:2 [p. 371 n.2]). Moreover, as Westcott maintains, "The word φέρειν is not to be understood simply of the passive support of a burden... "for the Son is not an Atlas sustaining the dead weight of the world"' (Westcott, 13f.). Also, as Moffatt puts it, it 'is not used in the sense in which Sappho (fragm. 95, πάντα φέρων) speaks of the evening star "bringing all things home," the sheep to their fold and the children to their mother' (Moffatt, 7). Rather the concept expressed seems dynamic, the upholding of the universe as it moves and progresses towards an appointed end (cf. Heb. 12:26ff.). The Son's upholding of all things involves not only support but also movement, as he bears heaven and earth onward to the predestined consummation when he shall 'fold them up, and they shall be changed' (cf. Heb. 1:10f.). Chrysostom claims, were it not for this divine and unceasing sustaining activity of the Son, all would disintegrate and possibly relapse into non-existence (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. on Heb.* 2:2 [p. 372]).

The author here is no doubt reinforcing dramatically the divine status of the Son by further evidencing his glorious power and ascribing another role that was traditionally in Judaism a prerogative of God. In the Tanak and Judaism, this sovereignty over the universe, this ongoing control over, and sustaining power of, all creation is viewed as a divine activity no less than

creation itself. The psalms in particular are replete with the idea of the ongoing power and control of God, His word, decree and command over creation (cf. Pss. 74:11-17; 105:28-41; 107: 20, 25; 111:7ff. 121:4f.; 135:6-13; 147:15-18). The 'eyes of all' are said to wait on Him (Pss. 145:15; 104:27) and lions are pictured as seeking 'their meat from God' (Ps. 104:21). He is spoken of as renewing 'the face of the earth' (Ps. 104:30), as having in His hand 'the deep places of the earth' (Ps. 95:4), of ruling the 'raging of the sea' (Ps. 89:9), of creation continuing according to his ordinances and all being his servants (cf. Pss. 119:89-91; 148:1-6; Jer. 33:25). Rabbinic Judaism speaks of God as the One 'who carries the universe' (Lev. R. 4:8), as He who 'bearest the heavenly and the earthly' (Gen. R. 22:11), as not only keeping Israel but everyone (cf. Sifre Dt. 40:1.2), as 'He who created the day has also created its sustenance' (Mek. to Ex. 16:4; cf. *ibid* to 18:12 [Lauterbach, 2:103, 178]; B. AZ 3b). Aquila answered Hadrian's question about what the universe rested upon, 'You can easily understand that what sustains the whole universe and holds together the infinite number of the elements composing it, is the breath of God' (Tanḥ. Bereshith 5; cf. Abelson, 20). So great is God's control over the universe, it is claimed that, 'No man bruises his finger here on earth unless it was so decreed against him in heaven, for it is written, *It is of the Lord that a man's goings are established* [Ps. 37:23]. *How then can man look to his way?* [Prov. 20:24]' (B. Hull. 7b). Creation is not just a work in the past which continues automatically; rather the cosmic order is ever dependent upon God's creative power.

The idea of God using someone or something to preserve the universe is, like that of creation, not unique to Hebrews. Wisdom theology portrays God's Wisdom as the sustainer and governor of the universe (cf. Wis. 8:1). Philo speaks of God's Logos as being the instrument by which God sustains the world (cf. Cher. 36; Quis Her. 7). Moreover, Philo says, 'that the everlasting Word of the eternal God is the very sure and staunch prop of the Whole' (Plant. 8). Also the Logos is 'the bond of all existence' who 'holds and knits together all the parts, preventing them from being dissolved and separated' (Fug. 112). In addition, the Logos is viewed 'as a rudder' 'which the Helmsman of the Universe grasps...to guide all things on their course' (Mig. 6). In the Targum, the *Memra*, is said to rule over the destiny of man as God's agent (J. Trg. Num. 27:16; cf. JE 8:465). In the Talmud, it is further claimed that the *Shechinah* 'preservest them all' [i.e. all that he was instrumental in making] [Neh. 9:6] (B. BB 25a). In the Midrash, it is claimed that 'The angels are sustained only by the splendour of the *Shechinah*' (Ex. R. 32:4; cf. ARN^a 12 [Goldin]). Montefiore & Loewe translates Mekilta of Ex. 18:12 thus:

In every hour the Shechinah provides sustenance for all the inhabitants of the world according to their need, and satisfies every living thing, and not only the pious and the righteous, but also the wicked and the idolators.

(Montefiore & Loewe, 1974, 48)

For Hebrews, it is the Son who has the weight of the whole creation in his hand, and who guides and disposes of it by his sovereign power and wisdom (cf. Heb. 1:10ff.). The things of this creation can no more support, act, and dispose themselves, than they could at first make themselves. Such is the nature

and condition of the universe, that it could not subsist for a moment, nor could any thing in it perform regularly unto its appointed end, without the continual activity of the Son. By attributing to the Son this sustaining and preserving role of φέρων τὰ πάντα, Hebrews not only guards against the idea of mere adoption in the Sonship, but by underscoring the ceaselessness and permanence of this divine activity, like that of his divine essence, he also effectively undermines any attempted kenotic solution to his christology. The author of Hebrews assumes that, even during the Son's lifetime on earth under the limitations of manhood, his divine activity was not interrupted; the preservation of creation is continually dependent on him (cf. Heb. 1:3b). For our author, the divine and the human natures of the Son are co-existent, not alternate states of being.

The Contradictionist Solution

There is a solution which accepts fully both the pre-existent and the appointment traditions in Hebrews but claims that they do not hang together; rather they collide. I have called this answer to the christological problem of Hebrews the contradictionist solution. Moffatt says of the author of Hebrews:

He took over the idea of the divine Sonship from the primitive church, seized upon it to interpret the sufferings and sacrificial function of Jesus as well as his eternal value, and linked it to the notion of the highpriesthood; but he does not succeed in harmonizing its implications about the incarnate life with his special γνώσις of the eternal Son within the higher sphere of divine realities.

(Moffatt, I [i.e. the Roman 50]).

Braun writes:

Jesus ist präexistent: als Schöpfungsmittler 1,2, als Erhalter der Schöpfung, als voll entsprechender Abglanz, als originalgetreues Prägebild der Gottheit, als voll gottheitlich 1,3, und so ist er ewig 1,8. 12 7,3. 13,8. Bei alledem ist er Sohn 1,2; das Menschsein nimmt der Sohn später 2,14 erst an. Auch auf Erden war er schon Sohn als Redender 1,2, als gehorsam Leidender 5,8f, als sich Opfernder 1,3 6,6 10,29, als anders als R 1,4. Bereits in der Präexistenz vermittelte er als *Κύριος* die Schöpfung 1,10. Er war Herr bei seiner Menschwerdung 7,4, als auf Erden Redender 2,3; die Erhöhung machte ihn nicht zum *Κύριος*, sondern trat ihn als solchen an 13,20....

Gleichwohl „wird“ Jesus im Hb; Gott ist sein Schöpfer 3,2. Er wird Sohn, wie es der Text von 1,3-5 nur meinen kann, bei der Inthronisation durch Gottes schöpferische Anrede (Käsemann 59). Auch die Einsetzung zum Allerben ist wohl für diesen Zeitpunkt anzunehmen. Er bekommt nun, ἐγένετο 1,4, die Überlegenheit über die Engel....

Diese Christologie setzt sich aus Elementen zusammen, die einander ausschließen.

(Braun, 32f.)

Moffatt and Braun have made a case for their solution that deserves to be taken account of. Though the argument will have to be taken further and addressed more fully, ^{preliminarily,} preliminary, there is a general consideration that should make us pause before accepting the contradictionist solution, namely, that an author of such a profound letter (and on such important and integral issues) should contradict himself either deliberately or unknowingly, I find difficult to believe.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to argue that the adoptionist, kenotic and contradictionist solutions are inadequate in resolving our christological problem of Hebrews. However, there is considerable tension in Hebrews' combination of the pre-existent and appointment/exaltation traditions. Guthrie accepts the

tension, but believes it constitutes more of a paradox than a contradiction which may have to remain unanswered (Guthrie, 1981, 406-7). But this seems an inadequate answer to the contradictionists. So what we are to make of the tension will be the issue of chapter three following; the resolution of this key problem warranting its own chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SON APPOINTED HIGH PRIEST

5. Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι
ἀρχιερέα

ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν·

υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε·

6. καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει·

σύ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ,

7. ὅς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσεις τε καὶ
ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου

μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας

καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας,

8. καίπερ ὢν υἱός, ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν,

9. καὶ τελειωθείς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ
αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου,

10. προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν
Μελχισέδεκ.

(Heb. 5:5-10)

The prime objective of this chapter is to show the tensions within the christology of Hebrews, but to argue that the orthodox solution is still tenable, albeit in a revised form. The chapter aims to reconcile the pre-existent and appointment traditions in Hebrews without undermining the necessity for, and the importance of, the paradoxical tension between these traditions. The orthodox approach accepts the tension, recognising that it is vital to Hebrews' christology that full account be taken of both the divinity and humanity of the Son, and the language of his pre-existence and appointment. The issue before us is still, Did the Son become Son or was he always Son? Because the author applies the titles 'Son', 'Messiah' and 'High Priest' interchangeably (cf. 3:1, 6;

4:14; 5:5, 8-10; 6:1, 6, 20; 7:22-28; 9:11, 14; 10:19, 21, 29; 11:26), the same issue could be phrased, Did the Messiah become Messiah or was he always Messiah?, or Did the Son become High Priest or was he always High Priest? If the Messiah was always Messiah how could he be appointed Messiah?

In order to resolve the issue under consideration satisfactorily, we cannot do better than address that most difficult of passages in Hebrews, namely, 5:5-10, which seems to be one of the lowest (if not the lowest) christological texts in the NT, and where the author, perhaps like no other early Christian writer, speaks of the Messiah in explicitly human terms, and seems to say that the Messiah became Messiah or that he was not always Messiah. If we can resolve the problem raised by this passage then the issue of the Son being appointed heir in Heb. 1:2b will also fall into place.

The author in Heb. 1:3c has already alluded to the high priestly role of the Son and, in passages prior to Heb. 5:5-10, the writer has emphasized the necessity for the humanity of the Son who is also the great messianic High Priest (cf. 2:17f.; 4:14ff.). In Heb. 5:1-4, the author refers to three prior conditions before one could become a priest after the Aaronic priesthood under the Old Covenant, namely, he must be truly human (5:1), he must be able to sympathise with those whom he represents (5:2), and he must be appointed by God (5:4). The opening words of our passage Οὕτως καὶ (5:5) indicates that these pre-conditions apply also to Jesus though he is a High Priest after the manner of Melchizedek, and not of the Aaronic order, which is now superseded. However, our passage 5:5-10, while showing on the grounds of the

OT and the Gospel tradition how perfectly these pre-requisites were fulfilled in the Son, appears to support the adoptionist solution since, at least before his Incarnation, and probably before his exaltation, the Son lacked the human experience, preparation, training and appointment necessary to effect perfectly the offices of High Priest and Messiah (cf. Montefiore, 1964, 97).

The Humanity of the Son

Although there are considerable difficulties in the interpretation of Heb. 5:7-9 of our text, there can be little doubt that the activities described are truly human ones. They show how perfectly human the Son was and how he was enabled through suffering to sympathise with others in need. For example, *prayers and supplications with strong crying and weeping* (v.7). Angels were believed in some quarters of Judaism to have a role of petitioning on behalf of men (Job 5:1; Zech. 1:12; T. Levi 3:5ff.; T. Dan. 6:2; 1 En. 15:2; 40:6; 47:2; 89:76; 99:3; 104:1; B. Shab. 12b). However, the idea of the prayers being made with tears seems utterly human. Besides, the clause 'who in the days of his flesh' at the beginning of the verse underscores the Messiah's human condition when he made these prayers. Though 'flesh' is used as a figure of speech for the Son's whole human nature (cf. Jn. 1:14; Rom. 1:3; 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:18) this is not the sense here. Rather the sense of 'flesh' here is the sense that signifies the frailties, weaknesses, and infirmities of human nature or human nature as it is weak and infirm during this mortal lifetime (cf. Ps. 78:39; 1 Cor. 15:50; 1 Pet. 1:24). Suffering is endemic to this mortal stage of our humanity; it is the very texture of earthly existence and as Job says, 'man is born unto

trouble, as the sparks fly upward' (Job 5:7; cf. Ps. 90:10).

The problem with v.7 centres on this last clause καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας commonly translated 'and he was heard for his godly fear' (RSV). The basic difficulty in accepting this straight-forward translation, which has been noted by Harnack, Bultmann and others, is that the prayers of Jesus πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σώζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου were, in fact, not heard; Jesus still had to face the ordeal of death. Bultmann's own solution is to follow Harnack and emend the text the text by inserting a negative οὐκ before the participle εἰσακουσθεὶς.¹ Windisch also adopts this emendation, albeit with some hesitation (cf. Windisch, 1931, 43f.; Attridge, 1979, 91; Héring, 39 n.11). This seems a rather desperate solution. Another most ingenious interpretation attaches ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας to the following verse, i.e. 'because he feared God, he learned obedience by what things he suffered'. This translation is presupposed by the Peshitta, of which Riggenbach cites the Latin translation: '*et quamvis esset filius, ex timore et passionibus, quas sustinuit, didicit obedientiam*' ('and although he was a Son, out of fear and suffering which he sustained, he rendered obedience') (cf. Riggenbach, 131 n.45; Héring, 40). Blass-Debrunner (*Greek Grammar*, sect. 211, p. 114) adopted this rendering, but as Bultmann notes, it is a very artificial understanding and does not give due weight to the phrase καίπερ ὧν υἱός (Bultmann, TDNT

¹ Cf. Harnack, *Studien zur Geschichte des N.T. und der alten Kirche*, 1931, 245f. (cf. Bultmann, TDNT, 2:753; Héring, 39).

2:753 n.3). There is still the problem of εἰσακουσθεῖς which is left without an object (cf. Héring, 40; Attridge, 1979, 90 n.4). Attridge argues that 'these remarks about the prayer of Jesus conform to a pattern delineating the ideal prayer of a pious man as that was understood in Hellenistic Judaism' (ibid. 90). He maintains that a 'better framework than the Gethsemane story for understanding Heb. 5:7 is provided by Philo's discussion of the prayers of Abraham and Moses in Quis Heres 1-29, which consists of an extended commentary on Gen 15:2-18' (ibid. 91f.). The same was true for Palestinian Judaism. There is a tradition that originally the high priest on Yom Kippur, when he offered the prayer for forgiveness in the Holy of Holies, uttered the name of God with a loud voice so that it could be heard far off, 'even unto Jericho' (cf. B. Yoma 39b; P. Yoma 3:7.6; Westcott, 128). The rabbis also believed very much in the effectiveness of prayer seeing it as 'more efficacious even than good deeds' (B. Ber. 32b) and there is no more effective prayer than that made with tears as R. Eleazar says 'though the gates of prayer are closed, the gates of weeping are not closed' (ibid.; cf. 1QH 5:34; 9:5). Westcott comments:

There are three kinds of prayers each loftier than the preceding: prayer, crying, and tears. Prayer is made in silence: crying with raised voice; but tears overcome all things ['there is no door through which tears do not pass'].

(Westcott, 128)

Westcott argues the possibility that the Messiah's prayer here in Hebrews could have been one for glorification (cf. Jn. 12:27; 17:5) and was heard in the sense that he was exalted and seated at the right hand of

God (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:9) (Westcott, 128). Lane thinks that it is preferable to understand the statement 'he was heard' in reference to the context which speaks of sacrifice and to recognize that 'the one who was able to save him from death' was merely a traditional circumlocution for God (cf. Hos. 13:14; Ps. 32 [MT 33]:19 LXX; Jas. 4:12) and that it does not define 'the content of Jesus' prayers but the character of God as the Lord of life who acts for the accomplishment of salvation' (Lane, 1991, 120). However, it is significant that only here in Heb. 5:7 does the author make use of this traditional circumlocution and I cannot escape the conclusion that it is connected with the content of the Messiah's prayers. The Gethsemane experience still seems the most likely background to these prayers. It could be argued that though the Messiah was not kept from death, it had no lasting hold on him as God raised him from the dead (cf. Heb. 13:20), and in that sense he was heard (cf. Jeremias, ZNW 44 [1952-53] 108f.; Attridge, 1979, 91). Calvin thinks that there is an allusion here to the resurrection (cf. Calvin, 1963, 65). Peter Lombard offers a similar view in the interpretation:

He offered prayers and supplications to Him, that is God, who was able to deliver from death the one who besought Him, that is, to raise Him up.¹

However, I am inclined towards the interpretation of Ambrose and Bengel which has been adopted by Héring, Montefiore, Michel, Holtzmann, Zahn and others and which takes εὐλάβεια in the sense of

¹ *Collectanea in epistulam ad Hebraeos*, MPL 192, col. 437 (cf. Héring, 40 n.13).

fear or anxiety, a meaning well attested lexicographically and not inconsistent with the context (cf. Héring, 40). This approach to καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας gives what Montefiore thinks is the 'best solution' and a 'pregnant construction' 'and he was heard (delivered) from fear (of death)' (cf. Montefiore, 1964, 99). Héring reckons that the fear, which is stressed here, concerns that 'painful and ignominious death' (no doubt referring to the cross), and not the fear of death in general (cf. Héring, 40), but I am not so sure that the latter is not also intended. It could be argued that, if the Messiah was to deliver those 'who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:15), then he himself had to be triumphant over his own fear of death. The Son's fear of death stresses his humanity and oneness with the human condition (cf. Heb. 2:15). The enslaving power of this fear of death in general is described by Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia* 3.1.23f. (cf. Moffatt, 35) and Seneca's letters are 'thickly thrown with counsels against the fear of death' which he admits controls human life to a remarkable degree (cf. Ep. 30:17; Moffatt, 36) and confesses that if you take anyone, young, middle aged, or elderly, 'you will find them equally afraid of death' (Ep. 22:14; Moffatt, 36). Ben Sira speaks of the 'terror of death' (Sir. 40:5 [Skehan, 1986]) and the bitterness of its remembrance 'for the person at peace in his home' (ibid. 41:1). Death, the consequence of sin, was in Judaism the strongest thing that God made in the universe (cf. B. BB 10a). It was necessary for the writer to the Hebrews that the Messiah should face this dark reality and the fear of it as did human beings generally (cf. Heb. 9:27; 2:14f.) to strengthen his case which he

argues vigorously that the humanity of the Messiah was full, real and complete (cf. Heb. 2:9-18; 4:15; 7:13f.; 9:14; 12:2f.). Whether we resolve the difficulty of the clause in v.7 in the sense of deliverance from the fear of death or as deliverance from death through resurrection, the humanity of the Messiah is being inexorably stressed. There is in Hebrews no hint of docetism; the Son is really human, not one disguised as such. The stress on the Messiah's humanity stands in stark contrast to gnosticism in which docetism is inherent (cf. Bultmann, 1948, 1952, 1:168; Irenaeus, 1.19.4 ANCL; Stevenson, 76). Moreover, Hebrews portrays the Son not only as a human being, but also as an individual, unlike gnosticism which pictures the Redeemer as 'a cosmic figure and not really an individual person', whose *soma* is 'a cosmic entity' (cf. Bultmann, 1948, 1952, 1:299; Hippolytus, Refutation of all ^{Heresies} ~~Heresies~~, 7.27.8-12 [ANCL, 7.15]; Stevenson, 75).

The Empathy of the Son

'Though being Son, he learned 'obedience' by the things that he suffered'. The idea of learning obedience through sufferings in Heb. 5:8 provided for Cullmann the 'most important confirmation of Hebrews' conception of Jesus' full humanity' (Cullmann, 1959, 97). The coupling of learning with obedience, which in Greek makes in Montefiore's words 'an aphoristic jingle', was commonplace in the Hellenistic world being 'a motif which had been popular with the Greeks since the time of Aeschylus and Herodotus' (Mealand, 1980, 181). However, the application of learning through suffering to God's Son would be a considerable paradox to the Hellenistic mind,

to which God's impassibility was axiomatic (cf. Montefiore, 1964, 99). The motif is also found in biblical writings:

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

(Prov. 22:15; cf. 20:30)

Moreover, the idea is very rabbinic; both R. Akiba (d. AD 132) and R. Judah (ha-Nasi) the Prince (c. AD 165-200) observe that 'Suffering is precious' (cf. B. Sanh. 101a; B.M. 85a); Abraham is said to have had 'the merit of receiving suffering' which is a sign of God's love (cf. Sifré Deut. Pisqa 311; B. Ber. 5a; Heb. 12:5-11); suffering in this world fits for the world to come and makes for a better resurrection (cf. B. AZ 4a; Taan. 25a; Heb. 11:35). Ben He-He said: 'According to the suffering so is the reward' (M. Aboth 5:23). Israel is said to have received three precious gifts through suffering; these are: 'The Torah, the Land of Israel and the world to come' (B. Ber. 5a). Moreover, in rabbinic literature there are a number of references to the Messiah's sufferings (cf. B. Ket. 111a; Sanh. 98a; 98b; Suk. 52a; Pes. R. 34:2; 36:1; 36:2; 37:1; cf. 4 Ezra 7:28f.).

There would seem to be in Heb. 9:28 an allusion to the vicarious ministry of the Suffering Servant and an identification with the Messiah. The language there **εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας** appears to echo the actual wording of Isa. 53:12 (LXX) **καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκε**. This Servant Song in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, like Hebrews, is replete with cultic terms and nuances and the Servant is also portrayed as both priest and victim. Significantly, the Targum identifies the Servant with the Messiah

though it transfers all the suffering references to either Israel or Gentiles (cf, Trg. Isa. 52:13; 53:4, 10) while the Talmud attributes also the suffering to the Messiah (cf. B. Sanh. 98b). S. K. Williams concludes 'that Jewish writings subsequent to Second Isaiah provide no evidence that Isaiah 53 was understood as the picture of a figure whose suffering expiates the sins of his fellows' (Williams, 1975, 120) and that the vicarious suffering of Isa. 53 was 'an anomaly in the entire spectrum of Jewish thought prior to Jamnia' (ibid. 121). It has also been commonly argued that the Suffering Servant figure of Isaiah, especially the Servant passage Isa. 52:13-53:12 was barely of any significance as to how either Jesus or his disciples understood his death (cf. Brooke, 95). Hengel writes that 'At all events, a suffering Messiah did not belong to the widespread popular Messianic hope in the time of Jesus and a crucified Messiah was a real blasphemy' (Hengel, 1976, 1977, 1981, 1986, 247; cf. Williams, 1975, 3; Mack, 105). These statements may need to be qualified today in light of some Qumran discoveries such as 4QTL^{Levi} fragments, particularly 4QTL^{Levi}^d, which, on paleographic grounds, Puech dates to the end of the second century BC (cf. Brooke, 86). These fragments make reference to an eschatological high priest with a messianic role. Concerning this priest, it is written:

'he will make expiation for all the sons of his generation and he will be sent to all the sons of his [peop]le(?). His word is like a word of the heavens and his teaching conforms to the will of God. His eternal sun will shine, and its fire will burn in all the corners of the earth. And on the darkness it will shine; then the darkness will disappear [fr]om the earth and the cloud from the dry land. They will speak many words against him and a number of [fiction]s(?). And they will invent fables against him, and

they will speak all manner of infamies against him. His generation evil will destroy.

(4QTLevi^d frg. 9, 1:2-6; cf. Brooke, 87)

[] and do not mourn because of [him] [] and do not []
and] God will redress errors/many[] errors disclosed and []
Search and seek and know what the dove has sought, and do not
chastise the one tired with consumption and hanging a[ll]
And a diadem/nail/purity do not bring near to him, and you will establish
for your father a name of joy and for all your brothers a proven
foundation
you will desire {establish}. And you will see and rejoice in eternal light
and you will not be from the enemy.

(4QTLevi^d frg. 24, 2:2-7; cf. Brooke, 90)

In this fragment, as in others of 4QTLevi^d and 4QTLevi^c, Brooke correctly observes that 'this priest's activities are not only referred to with some of the phraseology associated with the servant of Isaiah, but his career seems to mirror that of the servant - a universal mission, light against darkness, vilification, violent suffering, sacrifice, benefits for others' (ibid. 93).

Some modern scholars claim that sinlessness would prevent the Son somehow from being truly human.¹ Sebastian Moore writes:

If the life of Jesus does not, for me, put up questions of the sort that the life of Napoleon, of J. F. Kennedy, of Gautama Buddha, of Hughie Long put up, then I am a docetist. My Christ has not a real humanity. He is a theological construct. He never existed.²

For such scholars Knox succinctly sums up the problem which he 'poignantly' diagnoses as 'the dilemma of the early Christian thought about the

¹ Cf. Kingston, 129f.; Knox, 1967, 69; Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1964, p. 53f. (cf. Robinson, 1973, 92f.).

² Sebastian Moore, 'The Search for the Beginning', in Sykes and Clayton (eds.), *Christ, Faith and History: Cambridge Studies in Christology*, CUP, Cambridge 1972, p. 84 (cf. Robinson, 1973, 93).

humanity of Jesus':

How could Christ have saved us if he was not a human being like ourselves? How could a human being like ourselves have saved us?

(Knox, 1967, 52)

It might be deduced from Heb. 9:28, where the author describes the Messiah's eschatological return as being *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*, that the Messiah's first coming entailed his being sinful. However, Hebrews is clear on this point since, whatever the strange inclusion of *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας* in Heb. 9:28 means, it does not imply that the Son was sinful during his first coming. The author makes it quite plain in 4:15 (cf. 9:14) that the Son's likeness to humanity in general stopped short of sinfulness; he was *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*. Moreover, the adjectives *ὁσιος ἄκακος ἀμίαντος* in Heb. 7:26 sum up the utter purity and holiness of the messianic High Priest and reinforce the author's perception of the Messiah as *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*. The Messiah is holy, pure in relation to God, blameless, innocent in relation to his fellow men, and undefiled, unstained in relation to himself (cf. T. Judah 24:1). In addition, a significant factor in the superiority of the Son's High Priesthood over that of the Aaronic high priesthood was the Messiah's sinlessness in that he did not like Aaron and his descendents first have to offer sacrifices for his own sin and only after that offer for others (cf. Heb. 5:3; 7:27). Also, this idea of the sinlessness of Jesus is shared with other NT writers (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22) and was deduced, as J. A. T. Robinson puts it, 'astonishingly early and apparently independently in several writers' (Robinson, 1973, 88). While the sinlessness of

the Son may be an issue for some scholars it certainly was not a problem for the author of Hebrews. The author may be treading a fine line by insisting that the Son was human in all aspects like us, sharing our weaknesses but not our sinfulness (4:15), but it is a very important and decisive line. For the author sinfulness may describe our dismal predicament, our diseased state as it were, but it is not a condition of being human. If being sinless is inhuman, then Adam before the Fall would have to be so classed. But if being human means to be a descendant of Adam, belonging to an earthly family (cf. Heb. 2:16; 7:14), being a partaker of flesh and blood (cf. Heb. 2:14), and suffering the weaknesses and limitations of humanity (cf. Heb. 2:17f.; 5:7; 12:2f.), then the Incarnate sinless Son was exceedingly truly human, historic and real, not a ghost or an image or a figment of the imagination or a mere idealization.¹

A more difficult problem than the sinlessness of the Son, which Heb. 5:8 gives rise to, is that it appears to support the view advanced by Arius that as part of the order created by God, he [the Son] must have possessed free will and was capable of vice as well as virtue (cf. Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 1:5, 9 [pp. 308f., 311]; Kelly, 229). One of the Arians even admitted that the Son could have fallen as the devil fell (*The Epistle of Alexander on the Heresy of Arius*, in Socrates,² 1:6 [p. 4]). Robinson claims that 'Jesus could have sinned like any other human being' (Robinson, 1973, 94) and believes that Hebrews

¹ Cf. Sebastian Moore, 'The Search for the Beginning', in Sykes and Clayton (eds.), *Christ, Faith and History: Cambridge Studies in Christology*, CUP, Cambridge 1972, p. 84 (cf. Robinson, 1973, 93).

² The Church Historian

supports this view (*ibid.* 85). It could be argued in Heb. 5:8 that through learning obedience by means of suffering the Son was able to avoid being sinful but that he was still peccable and could have sinned if he had wanted to. It might be argued that the Son's peccableness is supported by the common translation of 'tempt' for *πειράζω* in Heb. 4:15: 'He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin' (cf. AV, RSV & NIV; also Heb. 2:18). However, one must wonder whether the writer to the Hebrews would think that it was possible for the Messiah to experience temptation to sin, like sinful humans in general, when he had never sinned, when there was in him no root of sin, no original sin, no old man (cf. Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9) and no *יצר הרע* (the evil inclination of Judaism, cf. M. Ber. 9:5; B. BB 16a; Suk. 52a; Gen. R. 9:7). In addition, since it is impossible for God to sin,¹ if the Son was peccable then it would have to be possible to separate and drive a wedge between the divine and human natures of the Son. This I regard as totally impossible and I doubt very much whether the author of Hebrews would have regarded it as possible either, since for him there is a remarkable unity and oneness of person in the Son so that anything the Son did he did not do as man alone, but as God and man in one person (cf. Heb. 1:1-3; 2:5-18; 3:1-6; 4:14; 5:8; 6:6; 10:29; Jn. 1:14; Acts 20:28). The idea that the Son was incapable of sinning does not seem new to the NT since the author of 1 John speaks of Christians, whom he calls 'sons of

¹ It is sin that has separated God and man generally (cf. Gen. 3:24; Ps. 14; Rom. 1:18ff. 3:23ff.; 5:12ff. Gal. 3:22; 1 Jn. 3:8f.; Heb. 2:9; 6:4ff.; 9:26ff.; 10:26ff.; etc.).

God', as being unable to sin as a result of their abiding in the Son of God (cf. 1 John 3:1-9). Therefore, how much more was the unique Son of God incapable of sinning, not because he was less human than Adam or mankind generally but because of the unique union of his humanity to the divine. What then are we to make of the author's use of the verb *πειράζω* (cf. Heb. 2:18; 4:15)? It might be argued that if the Messiah, when he was in the flesh, knew that he was the Incarnate Son but also recognised the possibility that he could be wrong as his knowledge of himself was still developing, then he could have been tempted to doubt what he knew. In other words, the Messiah's knowledge of himself was put to the test. This would seem to be the import of *εἰ* in the temptation narrative of the Gospels: 'If you are the Son of God' (Matt. 4:3, 6; Lk. 4:3, 9).

Therefore, I wish to argue that the need to learn *ὕπακοή* through suffering must imply something other than the conquest of disobedience. I doubt very much whether 'obedience' is the right nuance for *ὕπακοή* in Heb. 5:8. The verb *ὕπακούω* has a range of nuances; it can mean 'to submit', 'to yield', 'to comply with'. In Hebrew the term *חַטָּא* [sin] also carries the sense of the result of sin (i.e. punishment, cf. BDB on *חַטָּא*). Therefore, applying this sense of the result of *ὕπακοή* to Heb. 5:8, one might interpret it as 'he learned the cost of submission [to God's will] by the things which he suffered' or 'he learned the cost of winning our obedience by the things which he suffered'. This interpretation is in line with the thrust of the

passage which is development, divine discipline and preparation for the priesthood. It is certainly consistent with the necessary high priestly prerequisite of being able to sympathise with those whom he represents since only he who has had toothache can sympathise with another who is suffering the same malady. He had to share fully the doleful conditions of human life and learn the pain of submission to God's will in order to be a 'merciful and faithful High Priest' (2:17). This self-denial, no doubt, reached its climax in Gethsemane and at Calvary (cf. Phil.2:8), but I suspect the verse also applies to the whole life of Jesus on earth. He no doubt experienced the pain of dying daily to self, to otherwise normal and healthy desires, in order to submit to God's will for him throughout his life. For example, the foregoing of the natural desire to marry and rear a family, virtually a religious command for Jews, was probably exceedingly painful (cf. B. Yoma 13a; Yeb. 62b, 63a; Kid. 29b; 30a; Sot. 2a; Pes. 49a; M. Aboth 5:21). Death instead of marriage is a major theme and lament in Jewish funerary epigraphy; a sense of incompleteness and a life unfinished is conveyed in the death of an ἄγαμος and an ἄτεκνος person. The epitaphs express the real and deep sorrow felt by relatives when a loved one had died ἄγαμος and ἄτεκνος (cf. van der Horst, 1991, 46ff.).

However, probably the most common meaning of the verb ὑπακούω is 'to listen', 'to respond to', and applying this nuance, one could argue the following sense for v.8: 'He learned to become sensitive

[to the will of God or to the leadings of God's Spirit] by the things which he suffered'. For Jesus the will of God was probably not, on the one hand, a perfectly sealed book, nor on the other hand, a completely open book; as he met each new opposition and antagonism, and learned to wait on God, so the Father's will became clearer. It is possible that the author has in mind these two senses in his use of ὑπακοή. The Son gradually learned more and more of the Father's will and more and more the cost of perfect submission to that will (cf. Nairne, 70f.). This I believe is the most likely sense though it implies that in 'the days of his flesh' the Son did not have perfect knowledge and that he had to develop spiritually as well as physically. However, the humanity of the Incarnate Son would not be genuine if he did not manifest a development [*Jesus increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man* (cf. Lk. 2:52; also 2:40)]. As Montefiore puts it:

It is inherent in humanity to develop. Not to change is either subhuman (in the sense of arrested development) or superhuman (in the sense of transcendence of human limitations).

(Montefiore, 1964, 100)

The Son made Perfect

καὶ τελειωθείς ἐγένετο (5:9)

Practically parallel to v.8 is the idea of Jesus '*being made perfect*'. Moffatt suggests that the perfecting here has a moral sense: 'the moral ripening which enabled Jesus to offer a perfect self-sacrifice' (Moffatt, 67). But, if the Son was 'without sin' he was already perfectly moral.

Moreover, Peterson's analysis of the use of the term τελειοῦν in a wide range of literature showed that the moral sense was by no means common (cf. Peterson, 102). Käsemann sees in the author's use of τελειωθείς here the influence of gnosticism (cf. Käsemann, 101), but the perfection that Käsemann has in mind is the ascent of the soul and spirit and the forsaking of the body as a component of the material world. Käsemann writes:

Jesus' obedience is thus an attribute of his earthly nature. It is not the enduring of a moral test, but a recognition of the plan of salvation and the mark of his humiliation that sets him on a level with the earthly community. While we may speak of a moral development or the enduring of a test only in a purely this-worldly sense, Jesus' obedience marks a stage of the way which leads from heaven to earth and back again, that is, his deepest humiliation. Conversely, the τελειωθείς represents a renewed, qualitative alteration of existence in which the sphere of humiliation is left behind. That one is made complete who is returned to heaven, just as he comes from heaven.

(Käsemann, 139f.)

At the heart of this interpretation is the gnostic myth of the 'redeemed Redeemer'. The Redeemer having descended and assumed a material body must redeem himself by his ascent and forsaking that body and in doing so he pierces a hole in the barrier, the curtain between heaven and earth and so paves the way for others to follow (ibid. 209ff.; 223-27). Westcott maintains that this perfection of the Son, 'was not reached till after death...It lay, indeed, in part in the triumph over death by the resurrection' (Westcott, 50). However, Käsemann's reference above to Heb. 5:8 is significant since the Son's perfection here is 'the result

reached through the way described, vers. 7, 8' (Davidson, 113). The perfection here is one that only comes through suffering (cf. Heb. 2:10), a perfection that is only arrived at through actual experience, progressively achieved by the Messiah as he moved towards Calvary. It was death and the cross which marked the consummation of the Son's suffering, of his knowledge of the cost of, and submission to, the Father's will: 'To suffer death for God's sake is itself described as the attainment of perfection' (Bruce, 1964, 105). Eusebius says concerning Martyr Marinus, 'after exhibiting a still greater ardour in his faith, he was forthwith led away as he was, and made perfect (τελειοῦται) by martyrdom' (Eusebius, 7.15:5; cf. Bruce, 1964, 105 n.70). Since the theme of the Son as High Priest dominates the section Heb. 4:14-5:10 it is not surprising to find a number of commentators taking a cultic interpretation of τελειωθείς (cf. Peterson, 102; Ellingworth, 1993, 294; Lane, 1991, 122). Death was the consummation of all the Son's suffering and in a sense the perfection of his preparation for the priesthood, and as Moffatt has claimed, Jesus in his death offered the 'perfect self-sacrifice' (Moffatt, 67). The LXX translators of the Pentateuch gave the verb τελειόω a special cultic sense of consecration to priestly service (cf. Ex. 29:9, 29, 33, 35; Lev. 4:5; 8:33; 16:32; 21:10; Num. 3:3) and it is this conception that lies behind τελειωθείς in v.9. Calvin renders the verb *sanctificatus* and argues that the ultimate end of the Messiah's suffering was that he might

thus become 'initiated into His priesthood' (Calvin, 66; cf. Peterson, 97). It is a state of being perfectly prepared for his High Priestly appointment and of being fully and perfectly equipped to come before God in his Priestly role. The author recognised that to be an effective high priest one must while exercising that priestly role share fully in the nature and experience of those whom he represents and intercedes for (cf. also Heb. 2:14, 17; 4:15; 5:1-9).

The whole thrust of the vv.7-9 is to show how truly human the Incarnate and exalted Son was and is, and how fully, how perfectly and how necessarily he shared the doleful conditions of human life in order to be the perfect 'merciful and faithful High Priest' (Heb. 2:17).

Appointed High Priest

The author invokes two key texts from the two Psalms which are probably the most important foci of his christology in order to highlight the Messiah's High Priestly appointment at his exaltation. The first is from Ps. 2:7, which was the first text cited in his opening catena at 1:5, and the second is from Ps. 110:4, derived from the same psalm with which he closed his opening catena in chapter one (Ps. 110:1). While Ps. 2:7 in combination with Ps. 110:1 in chapter one served to point out the Son's kingly office and ruling powers, Ps. 2:7 in combination with Ps. 110:4 sets forth the Son's high priestly office (cf. Kistemaker, 1961, 86). The exalted Son is not only enthroned as a King, crowned with glory and honour, but he is also and inseparably appointed High Priest; by connecting Ps. 2:7 to both roles the author is making it clear that

the Son is both Priest and King and that Sonship and High Priesthood belong together. Significantly, both psalms are royal enthronement ones and both the psalms are messianically interpreted in Judaism (for Ps. 2, cf. 1QSa 2:11-12; B. AZ 3b; Gen. R. 44:8; ARN^b 268 [Saldarini]; Targ. Ps. 2:2; also LXX 109:3 [MT 110:3]; for Ps. 110, cf. Gen. R. 85:9; Num. R. 18:23; Mid. Pss. 18:29; 110:4; also cf. Mid. Ps. 2:9; ARN^a 137f. [Goldin]). The prophet Zechariah speaks of the twofold office (kingly and priestly) of the Messiah (cf. Zech. 6:12f.). The Targum specifically translates צמח 'The Branch' of Zech. 6:12 as משיחא 'Messiah' (cf. Trg. Zech. 6:12). A similar idea seems implied in the Trg. SS 8:1-4, 'I will lead thee, O King Messiah, and I will bring thee to the house of my sanctuary, and thou shalt teach me the fear of the Lord, and to walk in his ways, and there will we keep the feast of Leviathan' (cf. also Trg. SS 1:8).

The immediate purpose, however, of the two oracles in our text is to show that like the Aaronic priesthood the Son's high priestly office was not of himself but of the same God who also appointed Aaron high priest.

Psalm 2:7

υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε

This psalm, not unlike Ps. 110, is one of the most frequently quoted and alluded to in the NT, both being messianic psalms *par excellence*. The words 'You are my Son' are quoted and paraphrased at a number of points in Jesus' life (cf. Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Acts 13:33; also Rom. 1:4). A perennial conundrum is to discover the point to which this 'day' of the Son's begetting refers in

Hebrews. Moffatt, with whom Montefiore agrees, believes 'we are asking a question which was not present to his [the writer to the Hebrews'] mind' (Moffatt, 9; cf. Montefiore, 45). Some scholars see it as referring to Jesus' birth (cf. Lk. 1:32), where he is called 'the Son of the Most High' (cf. Owen, 3:136). Others, such as Justin Martyr (cf. *Dial. with Trypho*, 88), believe that it refers to the Son's baptism (cf. Mk. 1:11, where a voice from heaven proclaims, 'You are my beloved Son'). Paul specifically proclaims the Messiah's resurrection as the fulfilment of Ps. 2:7 (cf. Acts 13:32f. also Rom. 1:4, [Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5]; Westcott, 21). Attridge claims the last scenario is the most primitive (cf. Attridge, 53). Bruce believes it refers to the Son's exaltation and enthronement because of the emphasis laid on this event throughout the Epistle (cf. Bruce, 1964, 13).

Büchsel supports his adoptionist solution by referring the application of Ps. 2:7 to the Son in Heb. 1:5, arguing that the Messiah 'is the Son of God in virtue of the Word of God addressed to him. If His divine Sonship were a natural or substantial relation to God, it would hardly be possible to refer a saying like Ps. 2:7 to Him' (Büchsel, TDNT 4:339 n.5). But Chrysostom argues that in his application of Ps. 2:7 and in the ideas of appointment and heirship the author of Hebrews was referring merely to the Son's human nature (Chrysostom, *Hom. on Heb.* 1:2; 2:2 [pp. 367, 373]). Hughes likewise maintains that, 'The "begetting," then, is the begetting of the *incarnate* Son - not the eternal begetting of the divine Son "before all worlds"' (cf. Hughes, 1977, 55). There is no doubt something in Chrysostom's and Hughes' approach to this

appointment language, but we need to beware of applying heirship, begetting and the language of appointment only to the human nature of the Son as we may be driving an unnecessary and artificial wedge between the divine and human natures of the Son contrary to Hebrews. Although the Messiah performed all the acts of his mediatory office in and by the human nature, yet, as I observed earlier, for Hebrews there is a remarkable unity and oneness of person in the Son so that he did not do them as man alone, but as God and man in one person (cf. Heb. 1:1-3; 2:5-18; 3:1-6; 4:14; 5:8; 6:6; 10:29; Jn. 1:14; Acts 20:28).

The Psalm could be interpreted metaphorically or allegorically as referring to the Son's eternal generation, contrary to Calvin and Westcott, the opinion of the latter being that the idea 'appears to be foreign to the context' (Westcott, 21; cf. Calvin, 11). Augustine explains it as a reference to 'the day of an unchangeable eternity, in order to show that this man was one in person with the Only-Begotten' (*Enchiridion*, 49; cf. Hughes, 1977, 54). Aquinas likewise believed that 'this begetting is not temporal but eternal' (cf. *ibid.*). Philo, who often understands the temporal language about the divine to refer to God's unchanging eternal being, interprets the 'To-day' of Dt. 4:4 as 'endless age' (cf. *Fug.* 57).

Given the association of Ps. 2:7 with the exalted figure of Ps. 110:1 in ch. 1 of Hebrews, the emphasis on the exaltation of the Son in this letter (cf. 1:3, 13f.; 2:9; 7:26; 10:12) and its relation to Ps. 110:4, the author would appear to understand 'To-day' *mainly* as referring to Jesus' resurrection, ascension and

exaltation which to him are a unity (cf. Hughes, 1977, 54f.). In this sense, Hebrews seems quite close to Rabbinic Judaism which sees Ps. 2:7 as referring to a 'new creation...on the very day of redemption, God will create the Messiah' (Mid. Ps. 2:9). Nevertheless, I cannot exclude totally for Hebrews the nuance of eternal generation in the term 'Today' since both the languages of pre-existence and appointment are so intertwined and interdependent elsewhere in his Epistle and because the author understands the words of Ps. 2:7 to be addressed directly to the Son in his pre-existence. Attridge's solution is interesting as he attempts to draw a distinction between the author's use of Ps. 2:7 in 1:5 and 5:6. The former he believes refers to 'Christ's eternal designation as Son' and the latter 'to refer to the point at which the earthly career ends and the exalted status begins' (Attridge, 147 n.126). I do not agree with Attridge here but his solution highlights the continuing tension between the traditions of the Son's pre-existence and appointment in the Epistle, so much so that Windisch spoke of *die unauflösbare Spannung zwischen Präexistenz- und Erhöhungs-Christologie* (Windisch, 1931, 12).

This passage as a whole, despite its own tensions, seems to support the idea that the Messiah became Messiah, since before his Incarnation and subsequent exaltation it would appear that he lacked the human experience, preparation, and training necessary for his appointment as High Priest, in order to effect perfectly that office (cf. Montefiore, 97). Besides the tensions between the pre-existent and appointment languages mentioned in chapter two of this thesis, this passage creates some tension with the idea of Jesus' earthly high-

priestly work in the offering of himself (cf. Heb. 2:9; 7:27; 9:14, 26-28; 10:10-12; 12:2).

Revised Orthodox Solution

The problem is, What are we to make of the language that the eternal messianic Son was so appointed? An analogy, or possibly more accurately a type, of this idea of appointing someone to an office which he already holds can be found in the ancient pre-exilic Israelite New Year Festival, better known as Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles) or the great Autumnal Festival of the Ingathering of fruit. The Israelites at this festival celebrated the successful conclusion of the agricultural year just past and looked forward expectantly to the coming of the early rains when the ploughing and sowing of the New year's crops could begin. According to what Day calls 'pre-exilic sources', this was one of the three major festivals of the Israelite year at which all male Israelites had to appear at the sanctuary (cf. Ex. 23:14-17; 34:22-23; Dt. 16:16; Day, 67). The other two festivals were held in early and late spring, namely, Pesah (the Feast of Unleavened Bread) which came to be associated with the Passover, and Shavuot, (the Feast of Weeks, [Pentecost in the NT]). In Israel, these three major festivals are also associated with its salvation history: the Pesah Feast with the Exodus from Egypt; the Shavuot Feast with the revelation of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai; and the Sukkot Feast with Israel's wandering in the wilderness and dwelling in tents. However, these Israelite pilgrimage festivals were probably originally Canaanite agricultural feasts which the Israelites adopted and adapted in accordance

with their Yahwistic faith (cf. Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:130f.; Day, 69; Snaith, 1947, 24; Clements, 69; Gray, 1979, 2; Johnson, 1955, 54f.; Gibson, 1956, 1978, 2).¹ The feast of Passover was no doubt a popular feast in NT times so much so that de Vaux claims that it 'was the principal feast of the Jewish year, and it has remained so ever since' (de Vaux, 484; cf. Jos. Jewish War 6:423-30). However, he acknowledges that it was not always so. The Feast of Sukkot, which is also known in Scripture in the two oldest calendars as the *Asaph* ('Ingathering') Feast (cf. Ex. 23:16; 34:22), is called in Lev. 23:39 (cf. Num. 29:12; Jdg. 21:19) 'the feast of Yahweh' and in Ezek. 45:25 it is *the feast*, without further qualification (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:2, 65; 2 Chron. 7:8). The Feast of Tabernacles was in ancient Israel 'the feast *par excellence*' (cf. De Vaux, 495; Snaith, 1947, 24, 26, 28; Eaton, 104f.; Jos. Ant. 8:100), and though this great autumnal New Year Feast was celebrated in Tishri, the seventh month according to the Babylonian calendar, the New Year in ancient Israel started in autumn. After the exile, due to the calendar change from the Palestinian system to the Mesopotamian system, Tishri became the seventh month and Nisan, when the Passover festival was celebrated in spring, became the first month (cf. Oesterley, 1933, 123; Day, 68f.; Vainstein, 96; MacRae, 253).

The thesis, which was adumbrated by Volz and developed by Mowinckel, argues that at this Autumnal New Year Festival, Yahweh and the

¹ Christianity, also, done a similar thing by its celebration of the Messiah's nativity on the 25 December, probably in opposition to, but certainly at the time of, the Roman pagan feast of the *Natalis Solis Invicti*, a celebration of the birth of the 'Sun of Righteousness' (cf. Livingstone, 1977, 106).

Israelite king, Yahweh's viceroy on earth, were re-enthroned annually with dramatic and imaginative ritual. On New Year's day, there was from a very early date an annual ceremony in which Yahweh, the eternal King (cf. Pss. 29:10; 93:2), came in procession to His shrine, the Temple, and was enthroned anew (cf. Pss. 47, 93, 95-99, 24, 68, 132). In pre-exilic times, the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the Presence of Yahweh, was carried in procession up to the Temple Mount with great ceremony. There Yahweh was established in His place, and having yet again assumed His royal status, He proceeded to decide the course of the coming year. Also the enthronement of the Israelite king was not just a once-for-all installation but it was renewed annually, like Yahweh's eternal kingship, at the New Year Festival (cf. Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:106-92).

In the Festival, past, present and future are welded into one (cf. Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:113). Mowinckel saw the enthronement ceremony of the New Year Festival as celebrating and re-enacting Yahweh's primeval victory over the chaos forces at creation (cf. *ibid.* 1:108; Day, 81). The references to Yahweh's becoming King are closely associated with allusions to His creative works and Israel's salvation history. In the Enthronement Psalms 93, 96 and 97, Yahweh is celebrated as King because He is responsible for nature's order while the Enthronement Psalms 47, 98 and 99 emphasize Yahweh's acts on behalf of Israel. However, the New Year Festival was more than just a memorial, it was in a sense a repetition of Creation. Each New Year Festival Yahweh

subdues the chaos forces and the land is recreated and Yahweh, the eternal King, is in a sense enthroned anew (cf. Oesterley, 1933, 124f.; Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:115). It was no figurative use of mythic culture that introduced Israel to this concept of Yahweh's dynamic Kingship which she so dramatically expressed in the cult of the New Year Festival (cf. *ibid.*). Rather, it was the experience of the most important crisis in the farmer's year in the land where she settled. The early rains were absolutely essential for the ploughing and sowing of the New year's crops because they softened the soil which had been baked hard by the summer sun. However, these rains were not always forthcoming and with the ^{drought}~~draught~~ famine was a real danger. Zech. 14:16ff. clearly links these early rains with Yahweh's Kingship and the Feast of Tabernacles, and the water-drawing ceremony described in the Mishnah and Talmud (cf. M. Suk. 4:9-10; Taan. 1:1-3:8; B. RH 16a) are no doubt reflecting an ancient custom and concern. The eschatological element in the Enthronement Psalms and in the New Year Festival cannot be excluded (cf. Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:189ff.). The prophet Zechariah clearly envisaged an eschatological kingdom employing language which echoes the Enthronement Psalms 'And Yahweh shall be King over all the earth' (Zech. 14:9; cf. Obad. 21).

Though this thesis regarding the New Year Festival in ancient Israel, has not gone totally unchallenged (cf. Snaith, 1934, 92f.; 1947, 193, 194ff.; Clines, IDB Suppl. 626ff.; de Vaux, 502-6), there are signs in the Hebrew Bible, in post-biblical Judaism and in the cultures of the surrounding nations of

the ancient Near East which indicate that Volz and Mowinckel were moving along the right lines. The thesis has been strongly defended by scholars and very recently by Day (cf. Day, 67-87; J. Gray, 1979, 3-38; Eaton, 102-111; also G. B. Gray, 1925, 300ff.) and in general, it has received wide scholarly support.

What concerns us most is How did the Jews in the first century view the Autumnal Festival and the Enthronement Psalms? Mowinckel is convinced that there is adequate evidence to demonstrate that this New Year ceremony was continued in one form or another right down to the last days of the Second Temple (cf. Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:121ff.). Given the tenaciousness of cultic thought and practice this does not appear an unreasonable hypothesis (cf. Johnson, 1955, 53; Day, 71).¹ Whatever the origin, we do have in post-biblical literature similar concepts to those which have been viewed as pre-exilic.

First, though the rabbis celebrated four 'New Year' days, the 1st Tishri was the New Year *par excellence*, it was יוֹם תְּרוּעָה 'the day of sounding the Shofar' (Num. 29:1) and זְכוֹרֹן תְּרוּעָה 'the memorial of the sounding of the Shofar' (Lev. 23:24) and it was known as רֹאשׁ חֹשֶׁן (Rosh Hashanah, 'head of

¹ An example of this conservatism is the tradition which celebrates the story of the Benjamites who, when they had been decimated, carried off the young girls from Shiloh while they were dancing in the vineyards at the great Autumnal Festival (cf. Jdg. 21:16-23). Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel relates that on the 15th Ab (July/August) and on Yom Kippur (10th Tishri), the young girls of Jerusalem go out to dance in the vineyards and sing, 'Young man, lift up your eyes and see whom you are going to choose for yourself: do not look for beauty, but for a good family' (M. Taan. 4:8).

the year') (cf. M. RH 1:1-2; 4:5ff.). The Mishnah calls it 'the New Year for the years' (M. RH 1:1). The Sabbath year and the Jubilee year commence on the 1st Tishri (cf. *ibid.* 1:1; B. RH 8b).

Secondly, there is a significant connection of the New Year Festival with Creation. The rabbis believed that the world was created in Tishri (cf. B. RH 8a; 10b; 27a; Lev. R. 29:1).

Thirdly, the Festival is also connected with salvation history. The Jews believed that at the New Year the bondage of their ancestors in Egypt ceased and 'In Tishri they will be delivered in the time to come' (B. RH 11a-11b).

Fourthly, on this New Year's day, Yahweh was envisaged as ascending amidst shouting and sitting upon the Throne of Judgment (cf. Lev. R. 29:3; B. Ara. 10b).

Fifthly, by reciting on New Year's day texts making mention of kingship ('The Malkiyyoth' cf. M. RH 4:5f.), the people proclaimed Yahweh King (cf. B. RH 16a; Ara. 10b). It was not enough just to acknowledge Yahweh's kingship; it had to be declared. In the text, *Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is King of all the earth* (Ps. 47:6-7), R. Jose said there were two mentions of God's Kingship, but R. Judah said there was only one. R. Judah did not recognise the acknowledgement 'our King' as it did not declare God 'King' (cf. B. RH 32b and n. a15). R. Akiba said:

Bring a water-offering at the Festival, so that the rains will be blessed for

You [= Tos. Suk. 3:18].

Say before him sovereignty-verses, remembrance-verses, and *shofar*-verses:

sovereignty-verses, so that you will make him ruler over them;

remembrance-verses, so that your remembrance will come before him for good

***shofar*-verses, so that your prayer will go up with the quavering sound of the *shofar* before him.**

(Tos. RH 1:12)

Sixthly, the New Year was not just a new beginning but judgment is passed concerning deeds of the past (M. RH 1:2; B. RH 16a-b; P. RH 1:3) and also judgment was made for the year ahead:

R. Nahman b. Isaac [explained the Mishnah to refer] to the Divine judgment, as it is written, *From the beginning of the year to the end of the year* [Dt. 11:12] [which means], *From the beginning of the year sentence is passed as to what shall be up to the end of it. How do we know that this takes place in Tishri?? Because it is written, Blow the horn at the new moon, at the covered time [i.e. the appointed time] for our feastday* [Ps. 81:4].

(B. RH 8a; cf. Bet. 16a)

The New Year Festival is 'Like the Roman god Janus, it has two faces, one with which to look back into the year that is past, and the other with which to look forward into the year that is to come' (Snaith, 1947, 59).

Seventhly, most commentators connect Ps. 132, which refers to Yahweh's enduring covenant with David, with a festal procession which re-enacted David's making Jerusalem the home of the Ark of the Covenant, and hence of God's immanent Presence, and a number of commentators place the psalm with confidence within the cultic drama of the New Year Festival (cf. Eaton, 125-27; Kraus, 111, 116; Gray, 1979, 24f.; Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:115, 129). Eaton agreed with Mowinckel's thesis that the Israelite king was also

enthroned annually with Yahweh at the New Year Festival on the basis of the Royal Psalms which included Pss. 2 and 110 (cf. Eaton, 109ff.; Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:125-30, 133). In Ps. 110 Yahweh is viewed as sitting on His throne and offering to His 'son', the earthly king, the seat of honour at His right hand.

In the New Year Festival during the Second Temple period the enthronement of an Israelite king does not appear to be a significant theme if it is one at all, but it is highly probable that in the Israelite king's place there was a tradition of an enthronement of a heavenly messianic eschatological being by, and beside, Yahweh at this Festival in Judaism around the turn of the era. Emerton, who dates the composition the 'Son of Man' passage of Dan. 7 from around 165 BC (cf. Emerton, 225), agrees with Bentzen¹ 'in connecting Dan. vii and the Israelite enthronement festival' (ibid. 231). This understanding of Dan. 7 and the tradition of an enthronement of a heavenly messianic figure appears to find support in R. Akiba's comment on Dan. 7:9-14 where he taught that the passage implied that one throne was for God and one for the Davidic Messiah (cf. B. Sanh. 38b; Hag. 14a). D. M. Hay (who says he owes the suggestion to N. A. Dahl) detects a distinct possibility that both Akiba and the author of Dan. 7 were thinking of Ps. 110:1, a psalm which some scholars connected with the New Year Festival (cf. Hay, 26; Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:125, 133; Eaton, 109ff.). Significantly, the Targum on Ps. 110² applies the

¹ A. Bentzen, *Daniel* (1952, pp. 56ff. (cf. Emerton, 227 n.1)).

² See chapter 1 for my note on the dating of the Targum to the Psalms.

whole psalm to David as a messianic figure and although already king it speaks of his future appointment as prince, transmuting the fourth verse into:

**You are appointed prince of the world to come,
for you have been a righteous king.**

(Str-B 4.457; cf. Hay, 31)

If Collins is right in believing that the author of the 'Son of God' Qumran fragment 4Q246 had 'Daniel's figure in mind' (Collins, 1993, 71f., 81), then it is highly likely that the author also had the New Year Festival in mind. Certainly the ideas in 4Q246 of the heavenly messianic eschatological Son of God figure judging the earth in lines 2:5-6 and all the peoples being given into his power in line 2:8 has the hallmarks of an enthronement. Moreover, the New Year Festival themes of exaltation and enthronement permeate the Qumran fragment 11QMelch,¹ not least in its allusions to Ps. 7:8 in lines 10-11, Ps. 82:1 in line 10, and Isa. 52:7 in lines 1, 16, 23 (cf. Horton, 67ff.). A number of scholars, such as Eaton, Kraus, Gunkel, Gray, Horton and Croft have recognised the royal character of Ps. 7 (cf. Eaton, 30; Day, 88; Gray, 1979, 85, 90; Horton, 77). Kraus writes, 'Ps. 7:7 probably refers primarily and in the foreground to God's being enthroned on the heights of the sanctuary' (Kraus, 48). Moreover, the image of Yahweh as judge, as in Ps. 82:1, is an alternative way of referring to His Kingship (cf. Day, 126; Kraus, 48). Ackerman, in his study of Ps. 82 concludes that נָצַב ('to stand') in v.1 is used, first, to refer to

¹ Horton dates the extant copy of 11QMelch to around AD 50 though its original composition was probably earlier (cf. Horton, 60 n.3).

the stance taken by a sovereign to receive acknowledgement of his lordship in his court, and secondly, to address the accused in order to state charges and to pronounce sentence.¹ Mowinckel, who relates Ps. 82 with the New Year Festival, argues that 'the idea of a council (assembly) of gods belongs to the festival of new year and enthronement....A markedly Israelite feature of this psalm, which probably belongs to a comparatively late time, is the close connexion between the idea of judgment and that of Yahweh's universal kingship' (Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:150). The common refrain of the Enthronement Psalms *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* ('Yahweh has become King' cf. Pss. 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; also Ps. 47:8) is echoed in *מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ* ('Your Elohim has become King') of Isa. 52:7 (cf. Day, 71, 75). Gray relates Isa. 52:7 with the New Year Festival and enthronement (cf. Gray, 1979, 11, 21, 25 n.64, 130 n.35, 163), while Kraus accepts that *מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ* of Isa. 52:7, like Ps. 47:8, 'would refer to a proclamation of enthronement' (Kraus, 87, 90f.). In the Hebrew Bible the enthroned figure of these passages is Yahweh, but in 11QMelch Horton argues that the Elohim who takes his throne on high (lines 10f. [Ps. 7:8]), who stands in the assembly of gods (line 10, [Ps. 82:1]), and who has become king (lines 1, 16, 23, [Isa. 52:7]) is the heavenly messianic eschatological figure 'Melchizedek' (cf. Horton, 71, 74f., 77). If Horton is right then, along with the allusions to Pss. 7 and 82, the constant repetition of the Isa. 52:7 phrase *מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ* would

¹ J. S. Ackerman: *An Exegetical Study of Psalm 82*, Ph.D Dissertation, Harvard University, 1966 pp. 314f. (cf. Tate, 335).

appear to indicate that the *leitmotiv* of, at least, the extant portions of the text of 11QMelch is 'Melchizedek has become king' alongside Yahweh (cf. Horton, 77).

The foundation of Yahweh's annual enthronement was His eternal Kingship (cf. Ex. 15:18; Ps. 29:10; 93:2). Snaith says of the text, *Yahweh shall be King for ever and ever* (Ex. 15:18), 'This verse ensures that the Exodus Song of Moses is the seed-bed for all ideas of Jehovah as King, just as 2 Sam. 7 is the seed-bed for all ideas of the Messianic King' (Snaith, 1947, 177 n.3). Snaith lists Ex. 15:18 as first of the ten sovereignty texts which are recited at the New Year Festival (ibid. 177). But this eternal Kingship of Yahweh is not static but dynamic; in the enthronement declaration '*Yahweh* has become King' (Ps. 93:1, listed fifth in The Malkiyyoth, [ibid. 178]), His sovereignty, His creative power, His defeat of the chaos forces, and His salvatory works on behalf of His people are experienced anew annually by the Jews, not simply 'in memory of' but as a present and positive reality. If the shofar was not sounded at the beginning of the year, it was believed that evil would befall the people at the end of it (cf. B. RH. 16b). Moreover, the eschatological element in Yahweh's Kingship is reinforced in the festival by the recital of the eighth and ninth of the sovereignty texts in The Malkiyyoth, namely, Obad. 21 and Zech. 14:9 (cf. Snaith, 1947, 178; B. RH 11b). The Jews apparently saw no contradiction in Yahweh being appointed annually to a role which was always His, just as they saw no contradiction between man being judged 'every day' and even 'every moment' and the idea that he is

'judged on the New Year' and his 'doom is sealed on the Day of Atonement' (cf. B. RH 16a). Rather Yahweh's eternal, annual and eschatological Kingship are all bound together with the annual enthronement pointing in both directions. In the New Year cultic ritual we penetrate behind the doctrine of Yahweh's Kingship to the sacramental experience of it.¹ In Christianity, we have analogies of this phenomenon with the annual repetition at Christmas and Easter of such phrases as '*This day* is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord' and 'Jesus Christ is risen *today*'. Particularly, in the Orthodox Church is this notion vivid in the Easter greeting, 'Christ is verily *arisen*!' (cf. Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:113). Day reckons that a better analogy might be found in the Eucharist which not only involves the ritual re-enactment of a past event, but combines with it a present experience as well as having future eschatological overtones (cf. Day, 81).

It is likely that the three solemn occasions in Tishri (Rosh Hashanah on the 1st, Yom Kippur on the 10th and the Feast of Tabernacles between the 15th and the 22nd) were all a natural development from the great Autumnal ^{Festival} Festival (cf. Mowinckel, 1962, 1992, 1:120f.; MacRae, 257; King, 19f.; Johnson, 1955, 50 n.6). In rabbinic literature there is a close relationship between the three and particularly between the New Year and Yom Kippur (cf.

¹ By 'sacramental experience', I mean the sympathetic appropriation in the present through the medium of cultic expression of Yahweh's action in the past or in the present and which involves a personal commitment. The Sinai Covenant was so experienced (cf. Dt. 5:2ff.; Gray, 1 n.3).

M. RH 1:2; B. RH 16a; 16b). Therefore, given the central position given to the Yom Kippur sacrifice by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (cf. Heb. 9), there is a high probability that his Jewish addressees understood the connection of the Messiah's eternal Sonship and his appointment as such in light of the New Year Festival celebration.

The Messiah's eternal Sonship and exaltation and appointment is not unrelated to his role in creation and his continued control over it (cf. Heb. 1:1-3). His eternal Messiahship and High Priesthood is related also to Israel's salvation history (cf. Heb. 3:1-6). His exaltation and appointment followed hard on, or was ^{simultaneous} ~~simultaneous~~ with, his ascension to the Holy of Holies (cf. Heb. 4:14; 6:19f.; 7:26; 9:12, 24). Moreover, this appointment of the Son marks a new beginning (i.e. the New Covenant) (cf. Heb. 2:1-4; 7:22ff.; 8:13; 10:1). Finally, it also looks in both directions since, as we noted in ch. 1, there is in Hebrews a powerful underlying theme of continuity of God's supreme revelation by his Son, the New Covenant, with that of the old (cf. Heb. 1:1-3; 2:1-4; 3:1-6; 6:1-3; etc) and also with the *world to come* (cf. Heb. 2:5ff.; 4:1-11; 6:5, 11-20; 9:11, 28; 10:36; 11:10, 16, 40; 12:22-29).

Is the Importance of the Appointment being diminished?

At this point, the reader may or may not be conceding that the Messiah was always the Messiah and appointed Messiah, but asking, If the Messiah was always such, does this not make his appointment as Messiah superfluous? Could the pre-existent Messiah not have continued as such? What difference did his appointment as Messiah make? We must be careful not to diminish the

importance of the appointment which for Hebrews was absolutely decisive, crucial and of central importance as the painful fulfilment of the pre-conditions of priesthood in Heb. 5:5-10 make clear. But, What are we to make of the relationship between the pre-existent Son and the exalted Son? This is the crux.

Of course, there are significant differences between the typology of the New Year Festival and the antitype since no type is absolutely perfect. Firstly, the appointment is for ever, a one-off and is not repeated annually, just as his sacrifice was a once-for-all one, not requiring an annual repetition as its type, the sacrifice of Yom Kippur (cf. Heb. 9:25). Secondly, the appointment does more than look to the past; it has efficacy for ever in the past as well as the future (cf. *ibid.* 9:15; Pes. R. 36:1). Thirdly, there was more than a new beginning in the appointment of the Son; there was a new creation. The author of Hebrews believed that although Jesus was the pre-existent Son of God, he entered into a new dimension in the experience of Sonship by virtue of the Incarnation, death and exaltation (cf. Heb. 5:8f. *καίπερ ὄν υἱός*); a dimension which finds expression in the legal formula of recognition, 'You are my Son. To-day, I have begotten you' (Ps. 2:7; cf. Heb. 1:5; 5:5; Mid. Ps. 2:9). However, there is a unity and a oneness between the pre-existent Son and this new creation in Hebrews (cf. Heb. 1:1-14; 2:16f. 3:1-6; 4:14; 5:8; 6:6; 10:29), insomuch, that neither exists without the other. The union of divine nature with the human was an absolute pre-requisite for the exaltation and appointment as High Priest, for only the divine can truly know the divine and make Him truly

known (cf. Heb. 1:1f.). Philo seems to have grappled with this realisation that an effective high priest must be some thing more than human (cf. Philo, Spec. 1:116; Som. 1:215; 2:231f.). Philo suggests that when the high priest enters the Holy of Holies he becomes 'contiguous with both extremes [God and man], which form, as it were, one his head, the other his feet' (Philo, Som. 2:189). It was only that union, not the mixture, of the wholly divine with the wholly human that gives Jesus' sacrifice its inestimable efficacy and value (cf. Heb. 6:4-6; 9:15; 10:29). Only one who was both divine and human could be an effective, faithful and impartial arbiter [מוֹכִיחַ] who could lay his hands on both God and man (cf. Job 9:33).¹ But, on the other hand, if there never was or never was to be an exaltation and appointment of the Incarnate Son, there would never have been the eternal generation of the divine Son who is none other than the divine Messiah in Hebrews. His eternal generation is by virtue of, and dependent on, the eternal effectiveness, forwards and backwards, of his exaltation and appointment as High Priest. So, while what he was was indispensable for what he would become, what he would become is indispensable to understand what he was. Therefore, it is possible to talk of his 'becoming' and yet of his never changing, since what he became was what he always was. This is possibly reflected in the 'To-day' of Ps. 2:7, which as we have shown earlier carries nuances of eternal generation as well as that of

¹ The ancient Near Eastern judge placed his hands on the two parties to show that he is taking them under his jurisdiction and exercising his authority over them both (cf. Dhorme, 144; Habel, 196f.).

appointment (cf. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 49, also Aquinas in Hughes, 1977, 54; Philo, Fug. 57). However, for Hebrews the Son's earthly activity, exaltation, and appointment is the central event, the temporal centre of a salvation history which runs infinitely both backwards (cf. Heb. 9:15; Pes. R. 36:1) and forwards (cf. Heb. 9:28; 10:12-14). This decisive temporal occurrence represents the highest form of God's self-revelation, to which all other divine revelations must be related. To Hebrews, there could be no revelation of God essentially different from that made in and through the Messiah, the Incarnate Son of God. For Hebrews, it was for this event the universe was created (cf. Heb. 2:10; B. Sanh. 98b), and to this event all the prophets prophesied (cf. B. Ber. 34b; Sanh. 99a; 1 Pet. 1:10) and not surprisingly, for Hebrews, the OT was a divine oracle concerning the Son from first to last (cf. Bruce, 1964, xlix). Whatever function is under consideration, the identity and the eternal generation of the pre-existent Son or his Second Coming, they can only be fully understood when it is recognised that the real centre of all revelation is the Incarnate and exalted Son as Priest and King. Without this relationship, there would be little or nothing to prevent christology degenerating into docetism and syncretism and Jesus becoming a philosophical-religious principle, and his historical life a mythological cloak (cf. Cullmann, 1959, 321ff.).

Conclusion

We can say that for the author of Hebrews, the Messiah, though essentially divinely appointed as such, was not only Messiah in his exalted, heavenly state as has been held by the Socinians, but he was always such. He

was representatively at work on behalf of his brethren both before and after his exaltation (cf. Heb. 3:1-6). Moses appears to have been personally acquainted with the reproach of the Messiah (cf. Heb. 11:25; cf. Rev. 13:8). I conclude that despite the inescapable tension, far from contradicting each other, there is an indispensable, interdependent and integral relationship between the language of the Son's 'pre-existence' and the language of his 'appointment' in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The fact is that Hebrews' christology of the Messiah and his High Priesthood is inseparably combined with that of the pre-existent Son throughout the Epistle (cf. 1:3; 2:16f.; 3:1-6; 4:14; 6:6; 10:29). Not only can the pre-existent Son be spoken of as the Messiah in anticipation of this central event of his appointment as High Priest, but he is, always was, and always will be the true and real Messiah and High Priest, being eternally generated by virtue of the eternal effectiveness, retrospective and prospective of that central and decisive event (cf. Heb. 13:8).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ETERNAL SON

ὃς ὦν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης
καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ [1:3a]

The object of of this chapter is not only to buttress the orthodox solution and to attempt to undermine even more the adoptionist and kenotic solutions to the christological problem of Hebrews, but especially to examine the solution of Arius (c. 250 AD - c. 336 AD), a priest in Alexandria. Though there is no evidence that Arius addressed the Epistle to the Hebrews directly, he was dealing with the same issue, Did the Son become Son or was he always the Son? If he was always the Son, how could he be appointed Son? It was a question that Arius faced in the patristic era; his solution, which resulted in his excommunication and banishment, was that *'there was when he [the Son] was not'* (ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν) or to put it in another way, the Son *was not before His generation* (οὐκ ἦν πρὶν γεννῆθαι) (cf. Socrates, 1:5, 8 [pp. 3, 12]; Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 1:11 [p. 312]; *De Synodis* 16 [p. 458]). Arius differs from the adoptionist solution in that he accepts a real pre-existent figure in the person of the Son, but claims that he was created or begotten before time out of nothing specifically to be an agent in our creation (cf. Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 1:5, 9; 2:37 [pp. 309, 311, 368]; Kelly, 228). The Son, for Arius, was 'not from the Father, but He, as others, has come into subsistence out of nothing...He is not proper to the Father's essence, for He is a

creature and work....Christ is not very God, but He, as others, was made God by participation...alterable in nature, as the creatures' (Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 1:9 [p. 311]). The orthodox solution is that the Son was not just before the ages in the sense that he was 'begotten apart from time (ἄχρόνως γεννηθείς) by the Father' because he was the creator of time itself as he was of everything else belonging to the world of contingency, but that he was in the strict sense eternal, that is, co-eternal with the Father. To Arius, this orthodox position seemed to spell the end of monotheism (cf. Athanasius, *De Synodis* 16 [p. 458]; Kelly, 228).

ὅς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης

The opening verses of Hebrews have been described as 'the most stupendous affirmation of Christ, in contrast with all previous and partial revelations of God, as Son' (Robinson, 1973, 155). If this is true as a whole, it is particularly so of v.3a which, in contrast to the rest of the passage, deals with the person of the Son and his relationship to God the Father. Though human language is inadequate to describe exactly transcendental truths, the author uses in this passage very striking metaphors to describe this relationship, particularly the idea of ἀπαύγασμα, a noun formed from the verb ἀπαυγάζω, which means 'to beam with light'. The word is *hapax legomenon* in the NT and occurs only once in the LXX (Wis. 7:26). The word can be used either in the active voice as 'effulgence', 'radiance', 'brightness', or in the passive as 'reflection'. The issue before us in the expression ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης is, Was the Son

merely a reflection or the radiance of the Father's glory? The distinction is exceedingly important with regard to understanding the christology of Hebrews. The difference in meaning between the active and passive senses is significant and material since if something or somebody merely reflects a light coming from a luminous body, then the difference between that something or somebody and the original emitting body is being emphasised, whereas if that something or somebody is an effulgence of the luminous body an unbroken oneness is being stressed between that which is being emitted with that which emits. There appears to be a tendency for scholars who agree with the adoptionist solution to the christology of Hebrews to translate ἀπαύγασμα as 'reflection' (e.g. Fuller, 208, 220f.; Robinson, 1973, 156; Lindars, 1991, 34; Büchsel, TDNT 4:339 n.5; etc.), and for those who agree with the orthodox solution to translate it as 'effulgence' or 'radiance' or 'brightness' (e.g. Davidson, 41; Bruce, 1899, 37; Westcott, 11; Strong, 1907, 1962, 336; Bruce, 1964, 5; Hughes, 1977, 41f.; Ellingworth, 1993, 98f. etc). But there are exceptions such as Hurst and Wilckens. Hurst, uses the translation 'effulgence' for ἀπαύγασμα while believing 'that the Jesus of Heb. 1 and 2 is essentially a human figure who is *raised to* an exalted status' (Hurst, 1990, 113, 116, 177 n.67), while Wilckens uses the translation 'reflection' for ἀπαύγασμα while believing in the pre-existence and the eternal nature of the Son (cf. Wilckens, TDNT 9:421, 422 n.32). Each solution has support from the versions. The RSV has 'He reflects the glory of God' while the NEB has 'the Son who is the effulgence of God's splendour' (cf. also AV, NIV). Certainly the concept of 'reflection'

applies not so much (or not even at all) to the glory of the Son's deity shining throughout his humanity, but to God's glory being revealed in the perfect manhood of the Messiah whose will was completely attuned to the will of God (cf. Heb. 10:7, 9) and so it is the more appropriate term for the adoptionist solution (cf. Büchsel, TDNT 4:339 n.5). 'Radiance of God's glory' suggests the Son's oneness with the deity of the Father and so is more appropriate to the orthodox solution and more congruous with an incarnational christology. The big question is Which is the more appropriate to Heb. 1:3a?

The case for taking the more adoptionist term here for ἀπαύγασμα in 1:3a, namely, the passive sense 'reflection', could be argued as follows: First, the author of Hebrews has been influenced by Alexandrian Jewish theology which also used similar metaphorical language with respect to Wisdom (cf. Wis. 7:25-26) which, it is claimed, is merely 'a hypostatization of the being^{of} God, not an actual divine being' (Fuller, 208, 214, 220f.), or 'the personification of this attribute of God' (cf. Lindars, 1991, 32ff.). Caird claims, 'The personified Wisdom of Jewish literature remains from start to finish an activity or attribute of God, which God is ready to share with those who worship him, and especially with those who keep his law' (Caird, 1968, 76). Dunn writes with regard to Heb. 1:3a:

...we are confronted not with a particular pre-existent divine person (the Son, Christ), but a way of speaking about God's interaction with men and things which could use the impersonal imagery of light and stamp/impression as well as the personification 'Wisdom'...The thought of pre-existence is present, but in terms of Wisdom christology it is the act and power of God which properly speaking is what pre-exists; Christ is not so much the pre-existent act and power of God as its eschatological

embodiment....

We have a concept of pre-existent sonship in Hebrews, but it is the sonship which Philo ascribed to the Logos and which the Wisdom tradition in equivalent measure ascribed to Wisdom. That creative power of God, that revelation of God is now completely and exclusively identified as Christ.

(Dunn, 1980, 1989, 209)

Secondly, it is argued that ἀπαύγασμα should be understood in a passive sense:

(a) Bevan argues that 'The ἀπ- in the word may signify the indirectness of the light, that it comes by reflection from some other body, just as ἀπήχημα means an echo' (Bevan, 136).

(b) Nouns with a -μα ending regularly have a passive meaning, denoting an object, the result of an action, rather than a process (cf. Ellingworth, 1993, 98). Héring argues that "Apaugasma" does not mean an emanation (this would rather be "epaugasmos"), but its result, i.e. the luminous reflection, as in Wisdom 7:26' (Héring, 5).

Thirdly, the expressions indicating 'appointment' as Son or High Priest or Messiah, it is argued, support an adoptionist understanding of ἀπαύγασμα.

Büchsel argues:

It is only as a believer, i.e., in the personal attitude and decision of divine ministry and fellowship, that the Christ of Hb. is the Son of God and Saviour of men, 12:2, cf 2:13. He is the reflection of God's glory and image of His nature (1:3) only in personal fellowship with God. This is not stated in 1:3, but it can hardly be contested, since in 1:5 He is the Son of God in virtue of the Word of God addressed to Him. If His divine Sonship were a natural or substantial relation to God, it would hardly be possible to refer a saying like Ps. 2:7 to Him.

(Büchsel, TDNT 4:339 n.5)

There are a number of weaknesses in these arguments as well as in the basic adoptionist solution which I have already touched on in chapter two. First, in Fuller's *sophia anthropos* myth, there is no specific incarnation as there is in Hebrews (cf. Heb. 2:14ff.), nor is matter viewed as evil in Hebrews (cf. Heb. 1:2; 2:10, 14). In addition, it is strange that despite the reliance of the author of Hebrews on Wisdom christology in these opening verses, which Dunn, Lindars and Robinson among others advocate, throughout the rest of the Epistle, to use Dunn's own words, 'Hebrews has nothing else that can readily be labelled "Wisdom christology"' (Dunn, 1980, 1989, 208). However, if we accept, at the moment for the sake of argument, that Wisdom in the Book of Wisdom is a personification of this attribute of God, the pre-existent Son who is called ὁ θεός in Hebrews is spoken of as much more than a mere 'hypostatization of the being of God' or personification of an attribute of God (cf. Heb. 1:2, 8-12; 2:16; 3:1-6; 10:5-9) as there is all the difference in the world between a personification and a person. Personification is a figure of speech whereby we treat as a person that which of its own nature is not a person. The portrayal in Hebrews is of a genuine pre-existent figure (cf. Heb. 2:10; 3:1-6; 10:5-10) who was exalted to God's right hand but who was nevertheless the eternal Son and the supreme revelation of God. Moreover, the author avoided the use of the term σοφία and the phraseology is quite different, i.e. τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δόξης... Ἀπαύγασμα γάρ ἐστι φωτὸς αἰδίου... (Wis. 7:25-26). Any apparent correspondence between Hebrews and the Book of

Wisdom could be explained otherwise, as W. D. Davies argues concerning the origin of Paul's Wisdom christology, 'that already in Judaism the figure of the Messiah had become merged with that of Wisdom' (Davies, 1948, 1955, 1970, 158). The mere use of similar terminology does not of itself substantiate correspondence, reliance and correlation between passages. Other factors must also be considered.

For example, Philo also uses similar language to the language of Hebrews here, such as the term ἀπαύγασμα with reference to the Logos (cf. Philo, Op. 146; Spec. Leg. 4:123; Plant. 50) but it is not to describe the relationship of the Logos to God (Williamson, 1970, 37ff.; Dunn, 1980, 1989, 207). In fact, Williamson claims that 'there is nothing remotely similar to this [Hebrews' use of ἀπαύγασμα] in Philo' (Williamson, 1970, 40). In addition, Philo often uses both the terms χαρακτήρ and ὑπόστασις, but the term χαρακτήρ is used primarily to elucidate the Stoic doctrine of perception. The soul or mind is like a wax tablet which lets perception make *it* impress on it and which it retains until forgetfulness, the opponent of memory, entirely effaces the imprint (cf. Philo, Quod Deus 43; Quis Her. 180f.). This Stoic idea of the process of impression forms the basis of Philo's anthropology (cf. Wilckens, TDNT 9:420). 'Whenever, then, it [the soul] shall have received τῆς τελείας ἀρετῆς χαρακτῆρα, it straightway becomes the tree of life, but when it receives that of wickedness, it straightway becomes the tree of knowledge of good and evil' (Philo, Leg. All. 1:61). Philo speaks of the

'constant and unbroken nobleness of life' impressed on Moses' soul which is the 'image' man received when he was created by God (cf. Gen. 1:26f.) and by which he is more like God than any other living creature (cf. Philo, *Virt.* 52). The similarity does not extend to the 'bodily form', only 'in respect of the Mind, the sovereign element of the soul, is the word "image" used' (Philo, *Op.* 69). In Philo, ὑπόστασις and its verbal form ὑφίσταμαι occur in theological and philosophical contexts. The verb denotes the real as opposed to the mere appearance (cf. *Det.* 160; *Quod Deus* 177) while the noun is used to denote the world of 'intelligible reality' (νοητῆς ὑποστάσεως cf. *Som.* 1:188) and the 'existence' (ὑπόστασιν) of light (i.e. 'it has no existence of itself' cf. Philo, *Aet.* 88). However, according to Williamson, at no time does Philo state that the Logos is the χαρακτήρ of the divine ὑπόστασις (cf. Williamson, 1970, 78ff.). Moreover, there seems an almost total lack of Philonic allegorical interpretation (cf. Philo, *Conf.* 14) in Hebrews where the approach to the OT is typological, nor is the Son ever explicitly referred to as the Logos (a term only found in Heb. 4:12) which is a significant feature of Philonic literature. Thus the probability is weighted against a Philo/Logos backdrop to the 'Son' of Hebrews despite the use of some common terms. Käsemann sees the language of Heb. 1:2f. together with Col. 1:15ff. and Phil. 2:5ff. as clearly advancing gnosticism, not least, with regard to the Hellenistic εἰκὼν doctrine, the Sophia myth and the 'Daughter of Light' concept in the Acts of Thomas 6 (cf. Käsemann, 102-8). However, the fact that Hebrews and

gnosticism have some phrases and ideas in common does not necessarily mean that there is a historical link. More to the point is the total absence of such decisive features as creation by the Demiurge and the world as a prison of the soul. Therefore, though the language of Hebrews may appear like that of the Book of Wisdom, the meaning goes far beyond its use there, insofar as it is understood to reflect a personification of an attribute of God.

On the other hand, if we, for the sake of argument, concede that there is a direct connection between Heb. 1:3a and Wis. 7:26, the case for treating ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης as merely 'a hypostatization of the being God, not an actual divine being' (Fuller, 208, 214, 220f.), or 'the personification of this attribute of God' (Lindars, 1991, 32ff. cf. Dunn, 1980, 1989, 209), is still a relatively weak one. It could be argued that line 2 of Wis. 7:26 refers to an 'unstained mirror' (ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον) thus supporting the sense of 'reflection' for ἀπαύγασμα, but as Westcott argues, 'The threefold succession ἀπαύγασμα, ἔσοπτρον, εἰκὼν, - *effulgence, mirror, image*, no less than v.25, appears to favour the sense of "effulgence." Otherwise ἔσοπτρον interrupts the order of thought' (Westcott, 11). In Heb. 1:3a, Westcott claims that the sense *reflection* is less appropriate, as it introduces 'a third undefined notion of "that which reflects"' (ibid.). Winston in his commentary on *The Wisdom of Solomon* refers to Wisdom as an 'effulgence of God's glory' (Winston, 1979, 59), and says: 'The most remarkable feature about the author's description of Sophia is that he depicts her as an effluence or emanation of

God's glory' (ibid. 38). With regard to the use of the term ἀπαύγασμα in Wis. 7:26, Bevan pertinently points out:

If it means a ray of light or a volume of radiancy emitted direct from a luminous body, we should have in the verse of Wisdom just quoted the earliest appearance in extant literature of the idea which describes by the figure of luminous body and emitted ray the relation between the primal God and a Divine Being conceived of as in some sense distinct from Him and at the same time one with Him.

(Bevan, 136)

There are indications that at times both Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon appear to go beyond speaking of Wisdom as a mere personification of an attribute of God in such a way that Wisdom is capable of being interpreted as a distinct figure who can rejoice before God, be sinned against, and sit by God's throne (cf. Prov. 8:30, 36; Wis. 9:4; also 8:4; 9:1-2; 10:2; see Appendix).

Secondly, as to the arguments that ἀπαύγασμα should be taken in the passive sense:

(a) though the prefix ἀπ- in the word may signify the indirectness of the light, it also has the very common sense *away from* as in ἀπόβλημα ('anything cast away'). Therefore, the presence of the prefix does not settle the issue of the voice (cf. Williamson, 1970, 37).

(b) nor does the -μα ending provide conclusive evidence for the voice since the term appears to have been used in the active in other writings.

Heliodorus appears to use the term in the active sense:

Οὐχ ἥκιστα γοῦν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸν ἔσχατον τῶν κινδύνων ἐνέβαλλεν οὐ τὸ βίαιον τοῦ κλύδωνος, οὐπω γὰρ ὁλοσχερῶς ἐκτετάρακτο, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἄτεχνον τοῦ κυβερνῶντος ἀντισχόντος μὲν ἐφ' ὅσον ἡμερινοῦ φωτὸς ἀπαύγασμα περιέλαμπεν

ἀπειπόντος δὲ τοῦ σκότους ἐκνικήσαντος.

(Heliodorus *scr. erot.*, *Aethiopica* 5.27.4; cf. Williamson, 1970, 37 n.2)

is saying that the voyagers entered into extreme danger, Heliodorus appears to be saying that the extreme dangers of the not because of the storm, but because of the lack of skill of the helmsman, elements have not yet befallen us and that the guiding power is holding its who was successful only for as long as 'the effulgence of the ground and that the shining around of the effulgence of the great daily light light of day' shone round them... continues to overpower the darkness. Also Philo, who uses ἀπαύγασμα three

times (cf. *Spec. Leg.* 4:123; *Plant.* 50; *Op.* 146), appears to use the term in both senses. Williamson and Westcott argue correctly that the occurrence of the term in *Spec. Leg.* is active in meaning, τὸ δ' ἐμφυσώμενον δῆλον ὡς αἰθέριον ἦν πνεῦμα καὶ εἰ δὴ τι αἰθερίου πνεύματος κρεῖσσον, ἅτε τῆς μακαρίας καὶ τρισμακαρίας φύσεως ἀπαύγασμα (*Spec. Leg.* 4:123; cf. Williamson, 1970, 37f.; Westcott, 10; Illingworth, 1993, 98f.). In fact, though Bauer prefers the passive in Plutarch,¹ he argues for the active sense in *Wis.* 7:26 and in all the three occurrences of the term in Philo (cf. Bauer, 82). Hurst claims that the word in *Wis.* 7:26 'definitely has the active meaning' (Hurst, 1987, 155 n.16). Moulton² holds that the Biblical meaning of ἀπαύγασμα is quite clear; the choice being between sunlight and moonlight, he sees the active

¹ Williamson seems to interpret an active sense in Plutarch's use of the term: 'Since here on earth places near lakes and rivers open to the sun take on the colour and brilliance of the purple and red awnings that shade them, by reason of the reflections giving off many various effulgences (διαφόρους ἀπαυγασμούς), what wonder if a great flood of shade...takes from the moon at different times the strain of different hues...?' (Plutarchus, *De facie in orbe lunae* 934D; cf. Williamson, 1970, 37 n.2).

² J. H. Moulton, & W. F. Howard, 'A Grammar of N.T. Greek' (II, Accidence and Word-Formation, 1929 pp. 298-99) (cf. Williamson, 1970, 38; Wilson, 1987, 32).

(i.e. 'effulgence' $\varphi\tilde{\omega}\varsigma \ \epsilon\kappa \ \varphi\omega\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$) as being fairly certain. This is how our text in Heb. 1:3a is taken by the church fathers such as Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodoret and Chrysostom (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. on Heb.* 2:1 [p. 370]; Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 2:9 [p. 116]; Athanasius, *Circular to the Bishops of Egypt* 13 [p. 230]; Ambrose, *De Fide* 2:2-3 [p. 223]; Bauer, 82; Williamson, 1970, 38). The fact that the early Greek fathers understood the term in the active sense is very important since their knowledge of Greek was better than ours today.

Thirdly, the issue of the appointment language of Heb.1:5, which according to Büchsel supports a translation of 'reflection' for ἀπαύγασμα in 1:3, has largely been dealt with in chapters two and three. In this Epistle, the language of appointment does not seem to undermine or contradict the language of pre-existence. Both types of language exist in the Epistle and both appear central and crucial to its christology. An important feature of Hebrews is how the author intermingles references to the pre-existent Son with those of the incarnate, exalted and appointed Son and passes so easily from one to the other (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:5-9; 3:1-6; 4:14; 5:8; 7:28). In fact, it could be maintained that the author made no mental distinction between the eternal Son and the human Son (cf. Hurst, 1987, 156). It would appear that it is not the immediate and direct design of the author to address absolutely either the divine or the human nature of the Messiah, but only his person. Nevertheless, some things that he mentions, and we have an example in Heb. 1:3a, have a special bearing on his divine nature and some have a special bearing on his human nature (cf.

2:14ff.). The Son may well be the eschatological embodiment of God's power and glory (cf. Dunn, 1980, 1989, 209). However, this is not only because of his exaltation and appointment, but because the Son was always, from eternity to eternity, the embodiment of God's power and glory. The Son as ὁ θεός could not be appointed or exalted to such a status. Therefore, it could be argued that the appointment language of Ps. 2:7 pertains more appropriately to the human nature of the Son while that of 1:3a pertains more appropriately to the divine. Yet, while I believe that there is some truth in this understanding, even this approach does not do full justice to the christology of Hebrews as there is an interdependency between the two types of language which their intermingling implies that required the attention and explanation that it was given in chapter three.

There are other interpretations of Heb. 1:3. First, it has been claimed that the author of Hebrews is describing the kingly office to which Jesus is heir. Through his being exalted in power, glory and honour (cf. Heb. 2:9), the Son expresses and represents the Father (cf. Owen, 3:89). Secondly, it has also been claimed that these words refer to the prophetic office of the Son. Socinians generally have argued that he was 'the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His essence' because he revealed and declared more fully and clearly God's will to men which before had only been done darkly and in shadows. More specifically, Schlichtingius¹ applies the words to all the likeness that he supposes existed between God and the earthly Jesus (cf. Owen, 3:89). The solution of Hurst, who understands ἀπαύγασμα in the active sense of effulgence,

1. Tomas Schlichtingius was a Socinian author. He wrote "A Confession of Christian Faith, published in the name of the Churches which in Poland acknowledge one God, and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit." It appeared in 1642. (cf. John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, [2:349 n.1], edited by W. H. Gould [16 vols.] The Banner of Truth Trust, London 1965).

appears like a variation of this Socinian interpretation when he says 'there is *prima facie* a case for saying that if one reads the chapter *from the beginning*, the figure in view is essentially a human one. Taken in this light, the language of 1:3 would be seen as appropriate to one who is the bearer of the divine wisdom' (Hurst, 1987, 156).

On the contrary, the author of Hebrews in 1:3a is describing more the relation of the Son to the Father than his roles or offices, and the author's concern seems to be to make clear that the Son himself participates in a wholly special way in the glory of the Father (cf. Jn. 1:14; Col. 1:15). The term ἀπαύγασμα highlights the Son's being and unbroken connexion with the Father; there is no place for a 'before' or an 'after' for the Son who is the 'splendour of God's glory'. Moreover, the author's use of ὢν not γένόμενος is significant as it guards against the idea of mere 'adoption' in the Sonship or kenoticism in the Incarnation and affirms the permanence of the divine essence of the Son's being even during the 'days of his flesh' (Heb. 5:7). The term 'being' (not 'bearer' as Hurst seems to indicate) implies the Son's eternal ^{continuity} ~~continuity~~ and co-existence with the Father's glory (cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 1:39 [p. 94]).

The author here in the expression ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης intends to set forth the dignity and pre-eminence of the Son's person above all, not only consequentially in the discharge of his High Priestly office, but also antecedently, in his status, worth, fitness, ability, and suitability to undertake and discharge it, which in a great measure depended on and resulted from his

divine nature. This understanding is supported by the immediate context, both preceding and following. Before, the author speaks of the Son's agency in the creation of the universe (1:2b) and after, of the ^{preservation}~~preservation~~ of the universe by the word of his power (1:3b). Both roles, as we have already shown in chapter two, are in the OT and Judaism the prerogatives of Yahweh. Moreover, this reading is supported by the chapter as a whole where the Son is addressed as ὁ θεός (1:8; see ch. 5) and where texts that in the OT are addressed to Yahweh are here seen as addressed to the Son (1:10-12; cf. Ps. 102:26-28 [MT], 101:25-27 [LXX]). In addition, the very comparison with the angels in 1:5-6, 7-8, 13-14 serves to show how infinitely superior the Son is to these created beings who are but ministering spirits compared to the Son who sits at God's right hand. The rabbis make it quite plain that the angels are God's creations, and that they had no involvement in creation being themselves created variously on the second and fifth days of creation (cf. Gen. R. 1:3-4; 3:8). Angels, in the OT, are called the בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים 'sons of god' (Job 1:6; 2:1; cf. Pss. 29:1; 89:7), and they are mighty in power and created glory, but when they come to be compared with God they are charged with folly (cf. Job 4:18) and cover their faces before the brightness of His glory (cf. Isa. 6:2). The expression בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים in the OT is applied to the angels as an expression of their close and familiar association with God; an association not of nature or of likeness, but of will (cf. McKenzie, 300). But the Son in 1:3a is directly compared with the nature, essence and likeness of God the Father as only a divine Son could be. Therefore, the more

appropriate interpretation of ἀπαύγασμα is the active sense of 'effulgence' 'radiance' 'brightness' and 'splendour'.

The Son's glory is therefore to be distinguished from the glory that radiated from Moses when he descended from Mt Sinai with the two tablets of the testimony (cf. Ex. 34:29f.) since Moses' glory was a derived one. The Talmud teaches that Moses as a reward 'obtained the brightness of his face' (B. Ber. 7a; cf. Trg. Onk. Ex. 34:29; 2 Cor. 3:7). The Palestinian Targum renders Ex. 34:29 'his face shone with the splendour which had come upon him from the brightness of the glory of the Lord's *Shekinah* in the time of His speaking with him' (cf. also Ex. Trg. Ps.-Jon. Ex. 34:29; Ex. R. 47:6; Dt. R. 3:12). In contrast, since the Son is the effulgence of the Father's glory, it is essentially his and not derived.

For Hebrews, as for Judaism and the OT (cf. Isa. 40:18, 25; 46:5), only God can be compared with God, and so the author has set forth the relation of the Son to the Father aptly and strikingly by an allusion to the sun and its beams, through the idea of radiance streaming from a brilliant light. The metaphor of light is exceedingly pertinent as it serves to symbolise the way a luminous body sends out, without any force coming into play or any loss being suffered, emanations of its essence even to the most remote corners of the universe while always remaining one with the emanations (cf. Bevan, 134; cf. B. Sanh. 39a). If there is an eternal sun, there must also be an eternal radiance. The radiance of the sun is as old as the sun itself; its brightness cannot be separated from it or from light but it is a natural property of it and it is impossible to

have the one without the other. Therefore, as there was never a moment when God was devoid of His wisdom, so there was never when He was without the radiance of His glory. In contrast to the solution of Arius, the Son as the radiance of the Father's glory is co-equal, co-existent and co-eternal with the Father and without the Son, God would not be God just as the sun would not be the sun without its radiance (cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 2:9 [p. 116]; Athanasia, *Circular to the Bishops of Egypt* 13 [p. 230]; Ambrose, *De Fide* 1:79 [p. 214]; Strong, 1907, 1962, 336).

καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ

The term χαρακτήρ, which only occurs here in the NT, could be interpreted as expressing the idea of a stamp on a seal which reproduces in its impress every line of its form. There cannot exist in the impression what is not in the stamp. Early examples of the term use it to denote the 'typical features' of a man or people. Astyages recognised the young Cyrus by the χαρακτήρ τοῦ προσώπου (cf. Hdt., I, 116, 1; Wilckens, TDNT 9:418).

Still the metaphor of χαρακτήρ in the sense of 'impression' is limited because it is essentially impersonal and because it might be inferred that the Son is as distinct from the Father as the impression is from the stamp. Attridge reckons that the passive noun χαρακτήρ parallels ἀπαύγασμα and thus may support a passive understanding of the latter (cf. Attridge, 43). This understanding would support the adoptionist solution since if χαρακτήρ has the passive meaning 'impressed image' then ἀπαύγασμα should be translated

with a parallel passive such as 'reflection' rather than 'effulgence' (cf. Wilckens, TDNT 9:422 n.32). Attridge and Wilckens have a point since one would normally expect a passive to be paralleled with a passive though I see no reason why Hebrews cannot use both the active and passive voices in complementary expressions (cf. Origen, *De Principiis* I.ii.7f.; Theodore of Mopsuestia - *Commentary on John*^{1:1} ad loc.; cf. Hughes, 1977, 44). However, assuming that the author is using the terms in parallel, the argument is still not watertight since the term *χαρακτήρ* also carries an active sense of 'representation' which would support the preferred active sense of 'effulgence' for *ἀπαύγασμα*. The Son as the *χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ* is 'an exact representation of his (=God's) nature' (Bauer, 876). As God's final and decisive revelation to humanity and the radiance of His glory, the Son represents to us in all its fullness the very essence of the Godhead. Therefore, the paralleling of *χαρακτήρ* with *ἀπαύγασμα* does not settle the issue in favour of the adoptionist solution.

Robinson, appealing to Philo's Op. 69, claims with regard to Heb. 1:3, 'the language here is almost certainly intended to have reference not to a divine or semi-divine being but to the biblical account of the nature and glory of man. For to be the stamp (*character*) of God's very being is truly to be in his image' (Robinson, 1973, 155).

Man was certainly made in the image of God so much so that in Judaism murder was a ^{heinous} ~~heinous~~ crime because 'if one sheds blood it is

accounted to him as though he had diminished the divine image. For it is said: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood...for in the image of God he made man" [Gen. 9:6] (Mek. to Ex. 20:13 [Lauterbach, 2:262]). However, it is a mistake to see a reference to Gen. 1:27 here in Hebrews.

First, the person referred to in Hebrews is the 'radiance of God's glory', and is unlikely to refer to the image of God in ordinary man who could not bear even to look at a derived and transient form of God's glory (cf. Ex. 34:29f.; B. Ber. 7a; Trg. Onk. Ex. 34:29; 2 Cor. 3:7).

Secondly, the metaphor is used here to show that there is an exact correspondence between the Son and the Father which could only come from a genuine Father-Son relationship, and not from adoption. The LXX 4 Macc. 15:4 calls the likeness between parents and children a *χαρακτήρ*, saying that we parents have impressed (*ἐναποσφραγίζομεν*) a likeness on the latter. A story is told in the Talmud of Abraham being derided by the peoples of the world because he claimed to have fathered, at the age of a hundred, Isaac, whom they regarded as being adopted. However, when they saw Isaac's likeness to his father, 'they all cried out, *Abraham begat Isaac*' (B. BM 87a; cf. Gen. R. 53:6).

Thirdly, the Son is not just *χαρακτήρ* but *χαρακτήρ* of the Father's *ὕπόστασις*. Scientifically, *ὕπόστασις* usually refers to anything that settles at the bottom, no matter of what kind. Thus the slimy bottom of stagnant waters is *ὕπόστασις*, as is the wine which remains when the 'air' has

evaporated or when the sediment is left in the process of fermentation. Ὑπόστασις is what settles, what remains, the sediment, collection, deposit, or residue, in whatever form (cf. Köster, TDNT 8:574). In Greek philosophy, ὑπόστασις came 'to denote the reality which is not immediately apparent but concealed behind mere appearance' (ibid. 576). In Dt. 11:6 [LXX], ὑπόστασις is employed for the Hebrew term **יָסַד** which carries the meaning of 'substance' and 'existence' (cf. Gen. 7:4, 23; DBD under **יָסַד** [p. 879]). In Job 22:20, where Köster believes that **יָסַד** was the original reading, ὑπόστασις denotes immovable property as opposed to movable (κατάλειμμα), which can be destroyed by fire (cf. Köster, TDNT 8:580). The term can be used in these passages since 'property' is understood as the 'basis of life' (cf. ibid. 580f.). In Ruth 1:12, which Dorrie translates 'Even if she could say she still had the basis and guarantee of having sons' (cf. ibid. 581 n.89), ὑπόστασις refers to the 'reality' which gives a firm guarantee. In the Psalms, ὑπόστασις is used to show that man has no foundation of his own before God (cf. Pss. 88:47 [MT 89:47]; 38: 5 [MT 39:5]) or that the fountain of life or 'ground of hope' is with God (cf. Ps. 38:7 [MT 39:7]). In gnosticism ὑπόστασις is found as a technical term. According to Irenaeus, the gnostics regarded God as consisting of a number of letters (ὕποστασις ἐκ πολλῶν γραμμάτων) (cf. Witt, 335). In the NT ὑπόστασις occurs five times in various senses and contexts, twice in Paul (cf. 2 Cor. 9:4; 11:17) who uses it in the psychological sense of 'confidence' though Köster and Attridge claim Paul uses it in the sense of 'plan'

or 'project' (cf. Köster, TDNT 8:584f.; Attridge, 44 n.112), and three times in Hebrews (cf. 1:3; 3:14; 11:1) where it is used with slightly different, but overlapping nuances. The 'more or less fixed and developed usage is plainest in 1:3' (cf. Köster, TDNT 8:585), namely, that of essence; that is, what is at the very base of anything or person, what really give things their essential character and with regard to God denotes the actuality of His transcendent reality; what it is that really makes Him divine which must include His omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, uncreatedness, glory and honour. Therefore, man can hardly be said to be 'the stamp of God's very being' or ὑπόστασις as Hebrews claims for the Son. Given the uses of ὑπόστασις in the LXX (cf. Ruth 1:12; Pss. 88:47 [MT 89:47]; 38: 5 [MT 39:5]; cf. Ps. 38:7 [MT 39:7]) which show man's inferiority to and dependency on God, it is hardly likely that such an OT Greek scholar as the writer to the Hebrews would use this term to denote the image of God in man.

The term ὑπόστασις, albeit adapted, played a significant role in later christological controversies, not least, the Arian controversy. After much controversy over the application of ὑπόστασις it was formerly recognised at the Council of Alexandria in AD 362 that what mattered was not the language used but the meaning underlying it. Building on this *rapprochement* and union of the warring orthodox fractions, the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 affirmed the new Nicene faith of the formula μία οὐσία τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις which became the 'badge of orthodoxy' (cf. Kelly, 253f., 263ff.; Strong, 1902,

36f.). However, as Basil the Great confesses this use of ὑπόστασις differs from that of Hebrews:

It may however be thought that the account here given of the hypostasis does not tally with the sense of the apostle's words, where he says concerning the Lord that He is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person,"...

My opinion is, however, that in this passage the Apostle's argument is directed to a different end...For the object of the apostolic argument is not the distinction of the hypostases from one another...it is rather the apprehension of the natural, inseparable, and close relationship of the Son to the Father.

(Basil, *Ep.* 38:6-7 [p. 140])

With regard to Hebrews, Calvin claims 'The word ὑπόστασις...denotes (in my opinion) not the esse or the essence of the Father, but the person....The orthodox fathers also take ὑπόστασις in this sense, as being threefold in God, the οὐσία being one' (Calvin, 8). But this equation of 'person' with ὑπόστασις was a rather late development in response to the theological needs of the patristic ^{writers} fathers. Attridge, referring to the three uses of ὑπόστασις in Hebrews, more correctly claims, 'In none of these passages does it have the technical sense of discrete entity or "person" of the Godhead that it eventually comes to have in fourth-century Trinitarian theology' (Attridge, 44). As Westcott puts it 'The Son is not the image, the expression of the "Person" of God' but 'He is the expression of the "essence" of God' (Westcott, 13). The sense that in which ὑπόστασις is used here in Heb. 1:3a is more akin to the sense in which οὐσία was used in the patristic era (cf. Ellingworth, 1993, 100).

The question arises Do we have in Heb. 1:3a a complete christological

statement reflecting a binitarian view of God? Theodore Robinson, like Casey (cf. Casey, 1991, 144), does not think so though he confesses 'while the christological doctrine of the Church is not expressly stated, the language employed is such as will ultimately lead to it' (Robinson, 1933, 2). However, this view is influenced by the idea that to conceive of the Messiah as the Son of God would conflict with 'That intense and passionate monotheism, which Christianity inherited from Judaism' (ibid.; cf. Casey, 1991, 144). On the contrary, we have in Heb. 1:3a a compact and complete christological statement to which the orthodox church fathers could not add except to develop and to clarify the terminology in response to the theological and heretical needs of the time. Athanasius and the church fathers relied heavily on Hebrews for the formulation of their christological doctrine. Athanasius writes:

...now subsistence (ὑπόστασις) is essence (οὐσία), and means nothing else but very being...For subsistence, and essence, is existence...This Paul also perceiving wrote to the Hebrews, 'who being the brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his subsistence.'

(Athanasius, *Tome ad Afros* 4 [p. 490])

Gregory of Nyssa says:

If, then, the Only-begotten God, as Eunomius says, "was not before His generation," and Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" [1 Cor. 1:24], and the "express image" and "brightness", neither surely did the Father exist, Whose power and wisdom and express image and brightness the Son is: for it is not possible to conceive by reason either a Person without express image, or glory without radiance, or God without wisdom, or a Maker without hands, or a Beginning without the Word, or a Father without a Son.

(Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 8:5 [p. 207])

Like the orthodox formula of AD 381 μία οὐσία τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις, we have contained in the expressions of 'who being the brightness of his glory,

and the express representation of his essence' both distinction and community of nature. While distinction and community of nature is implied in each expression, it may be argued that the expression ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης emphasizes more the eternal oneness of the light with the emitting luminous body whereas χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως stresses more the distinction between the two. Theodore of Mopsuestia made an interesting connection between Heb. 1:3 with Jn 1:1 where he saw the statement 'the Word was with God' as parallel to 'the very stamp of His essence' indicating distinctiveness, and 'the Word was God' as equivalent to 'the effulgence of His splendour' indicating identity (Theodore of Mopsuestia - *Commentary on John* ad loc. cf. Hughes, 1977, 44). The idea that the phrase 'the effulgence of His splendour' implied the Son's consubstantiality with the Father, while the expression 'the very stamp of His essence' implied distinction between the First and Second Persons of the Godhead, is found as early as Origen (cf. Origen, *De Principiis* I.ii.7f.; Hughes, 1977, 44).

For the author of Hebrews, there is only one ὑπόστασις, of which the Son is the 'expression', and which he brings before mankind perfectly, definitively and according to the measure of mankind's powers. On the one hand, the Son and the Father have the one and same essence; two hypostases is tantamount to dualism. On the other hand, the author is no Modalist like Praxeas who appears to have taught (cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 5) that Father and Son were one identical Person (*duos unum volunt esse, ut idem pater et filius habeatur*). The Word, being a mere *vox et sonus oris* (ibid. 7),

had no independent subsistence and being, and so as a result it was the Father Himself who entered the virgin's womb, thus becoming, so to speak, His own Son (ibid. 10). In which case, it was the Father who suffered, died and rose again, and who, as it were, united in Himself mutually inconsistent attributes, such as invisibility and visibility, and impassibility and passibility (ibid. 14; cf. Kelly, 121).¹ Nor is Hebrews like Sabellius who, by his more sophisticated modalism, claimed that the Son and Spirit were temporary modes of the self-expression of the Father who by process of development projected Himself first as Son and then as Spirit: 'Thus the one Godhead regarded as creator and law-giver was Father; for redemption, It was projected like a ray of the sun, and was then withdrawn; then, thirdly, the same Godhead operated as Spirit to inspire and bestow grace' (cf. Kelly, 122). What is clear, and contrary to the adoptionist solution, is that Hebrews portrays the Son's person as an eternal permanent divine mode of being, distinct from the Father yet the author is not dealing with two Gods nor a division of the One God.

Heb. 1:3a, in particular, shows completely how inadequate the Arian solution is to the christological problem of how the Son was begotten. The expressions in Heb. 1:3a highlight the weaknesses of such Arian ideas as, that the Son had a beginning; that 'there was when he was not' (ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ

¹ Who Praxeas was, that Tertullian combats in his *Adversus Praxeam* (written c. 213), remains a mysterious and shadowy figure. However, it appears that Praxeas was finally obliged to recognise a duality in the Son's person, in the sense that the human Jesus was strictly speaking, the Son, while the Christ, i.e. the divine element (*spiritum, id est deum*) was properly the Father (*Adv. Prax.* 27). Thus the Messiah was in a sense a man inspired by the Deity (cf. Kelly, 121).

ἦν) (Kelly, 228); that 'God was not always a Father, but became so afterwards' (Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 1:9 [p. 311]); that only because of His foreknowledge that the Son 'would be good, did God by anticipation bestow on Him this glory, which afterwards, as man, He attained from virtue' (ibid. 1:5 [p. 309]). The patristic scholars repeatedly cite our text to refute the false teaching of the heretics (cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. on Heb.* 2:1f. [p. 370f.]). In particular, it was a proof text against the Arians (cf. Theodoret, 1:7 *Confutation of Arianism deduced from the Writings of Eustathius and Athanasius* [pp. 44-6]). Athanasius' works are saturated with references to it. It is significant that even those who held a contrary view to the patristic scholars recognised the force and import of Heb. 1:3a so much so that Theodoret says in his commentary that the Arians rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews from the canon on account of this text (cf. Migne, P. G. 82. 68ic; Young, 1969, 151).

The question arises, Where did Hebrews obtain this binitarian view of God, which involved the veneration of the Son alongside the Father (cf. Heb. 1:7)? I wish to argue that the foundations for it were already laid in Judaism (see Appendix). There seems to me to be a high probability that the author was alluding to, and intending something, that his readers both understood and were instructed in under the Old Covenant. In referring to this manifestation to them by the Son of the glory of God, I am arguing that the author of Hebrews was referring to the second person in the Godhead. The ark, which was the most signal representation of God's presence among His people, was called 'His glory'. When the ark was captured by the Philistines, Phinehas' wife affirmed,

'The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken' (1 Sam. 4:22; cf. Ps. 78:61). When the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, the tabernacle was filled with the glory of the Lord so much so that not even Moses could enter the tent (cf. Ex. 40:34-38). The author of Hebrews is calling his readers away from the types, by which in much darkness they had been instructed in these mysteries, to the things themselves which were foreshadowed by the types (cf. Heb. 10:1). The presence of God, His eternal glory, is not now to be found in earthly temples but in the Son. I wish to argue that the author possibly has in mind here no other than the immanent Divine Presence of God, identified as 'The Divine Word...Himself the Image of God' in Philo (cf. Fug. 100f.; Qu. in Ex. 2:68) and known in Rabbinic Judaism as the שְׁכִינָה/מִימְרָא (*Shechinah/Memra*), whose prime association with the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant is legendary (cf. Trg. Onk. Ex. 25:22; 29:42ff.; 30:36; Sifra Lev. 2:3.1; B. RH 31a; Shab. 22b; Ex. R. 34:1; Num. R. 4:13; 12:4; 13:2, 6). Despite the dating problem of rabbinic literature, the widespread use of the *Shechinah/Memra* concept and its very relationship with the Holy of Holies which ceased to exist after AD 70 tend to favour its antiquity and support the view that the rabbis were drawing on an old tradition in their development of the concept. An example of their development was the absorption in the meaning of the term *Shechinah* in the Talmuds and Midrash of the meanings of the two Aramaic terms, *Memra* (Word) and *Yekara* (glory), of the Targums (cf. JE 11:258f.). Also, given the opposition and hostility of the rabbis to Christianity and the continuing antipathy between Jews and Christians, it would

be unlikely that the doctrines of the *Memra* and *Shechinah* were first vented or 'developed' in the post-AD 70 era since they would have tended to support Christian claims rather than weaken them, a danger that Rabbi Eliezer seemed well aware of (cf. Midrash ha-Gadol on Ex. 24:10; [cf. Schechter, 1909, 40 n.1]; see Appendix). The most likely post-AD 70 developments in this area are those of a polemical nature such as those that deny God has a Son (cf. Ex. R. 20:10; 29:5; Dt. R. 1:12; Mid. Ps. 149:1; B. Sanh. 95b) or deny a dualism or tritheism in the Godhead (cf. Sifre Dt. 329:1.1; Gen. R. 8:9; Midrash ha-Gadol on Ex. 24:10; cf. also Tos. Meg. 3:41; B. Kid. 49a) or deny that the *Shechinah* came down as that claimed by R. Yose who said, 'Neither did the *Shechinah* ever descend to earth, nor did Moses or Elijah ever ascend to heaven' (B. Suk. 5a). Rather the doctrines of the *Shechinah* and *Memra* appear so integral to Judaism that they could not be suppressed despite the support they gave to Christianity.

There are a number of associations of Jesus with $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ in the NT (cf. Jn. 17:5; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:6), but here in Hebrews the Son is directly depicted as the 'radiance of the His glory'. The phraseology and content of the expression is Judaic: The Trg. Onk. Dt. 33:2 paraphrases the Hebrew term הוֹפִיעַ 'to shine forth' as $\text{אֶתְחַזִּי לְנֶא וְיִהְיֶה יְקָרִיה}$ 'the splendour of His glory'¹ [adding אֶתְחַזִּי לְנֶא 'appeared to us'], and where the Frag. Trg. has דָּנָה בִּיקָרִיה 'He shone through

¹ It is interesting that the United Bibles Societies' Hebrew translation of the NT has the equivalent Hebrew term for 'splendour' זֶהָר to translate $\alpha\pi\alpha\upsilon\gamma\alpha\sigma\mu\alpha$ in Heb. 1:3a.

his *y^eqara*'. Also the equation of the *Shechinah* with the כְּבוֹד (glory) of God in rabbinic literature is common (cf. Trg. Onk. Ex. 34:6; 40:38 with Frag. Trg. Ex. 36:6; 40:38; Moore, 1922, 56). The Pal. Trg. Num. 10:32, 35 speak respectively of 'the glory of the Shekinah of the Lord' and 'the glory of Thy Shekinah' while the Trg. Ps. Jon. Dt. 5:21 can speak of 'the Shechinah of His glory' (cf. Abelson, 157). The Talmud speaks of זֵיוֹ הַשְׁכִּינָה 'the effulgence of the *Shechinah*' (B. BB 10a; Ber. 64a; cf Ber. 17a). Stern, in his translation the *Jewish New Testament* (1989) which seeks to express the Jewishness of the NT, translates the phrase ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης in Hebrews as the 'radiance of the *Sk'khinah*' (Stern, 295). The Jewish Encyclopedia goes so far as to claim that 'those passages of the Apocrypha and New Testament which mention radiance, and in which the Greek text reads δόξα, refer to the *Shechinah*, there being no other Greek equivalent for the word' (JE 11:259).

In any case, by portraying the Son as the ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, the author of Hebrews was telling his readers in terms that they would readily understand that the Son does not merely resemble certain aspects of the Father but that the Son was the very glory of God, the exact representation of His essence and none other than the immanent Presence of Yahweh. The Messiah is the wholly valid revelation of this transcendent reality of God. For this author, the Son has a divine status; he has an eternal essence that could not be obtained through adoption nor put aside in an act of kenosis; he is no less than the Divine Word. Given the exclusive monotheistic faith of Judaism it is

remarkable how easily the Christian Church made the transition to, at least, a binitarian view of God and still claimed to be faithful to Jewish monotheism and to be part of the same community as God's household of old (cf. Heb. 1:1f.; 3:1-6; 11:39f.). I suggest that the most likely reason which can account for this phenomenon is that there was already existing in Judaism a view of the Godhead that was, at least, binitarian.

Although, perhaps the Jewish readers of Hebrews had not applied the terms Divine Word, *Memra* and *Shechinah* to the Messiah, and had failed to appreciate the full significance of the Son to the types under the First Covenant which foreshadowed his person and work, to the world to come, to the whole process of salvation history and to God's ultimate revelation of Himself (cf. Heb. 2:1-4; 5:11-6:6; 10:1, 26-31; 12:18-29), I wish to argue that, in identifying the Son as the ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης of God, the author of Hebrews was building on foundations already laid in Judaism, on an existing binitarian view of God which his Jewish readers understood (see Appendix).

Conclusion

Maurice Casey claims that in Hebrews, 'we are very close to the deity of Jesus' (Casey, 1991, 144). I would argue that the author of Hebrews comes much closer than 'close'. It seems to me to be beyond dispute that the Son was for Hebrews an eternally pre-existent Divine Being, not another God or a second hypostasis but a distinct divine mode of being of the one true God. The Son is of the same divine essence as the Father and, though they are

interdependent, the Son's distinct divine mode of being is non-interchangeable with that of the Father's, and they are co-equal in power, glory and eternity.

Moreover, the doctrine of the Son's divine status was not functional on the Church's sociological and cultural needs as Casey claims (cf. Casey, 1991, 9, 85, 136f., 146). There was no need to wait on the third stage of the Church's development when it became predominantly Gentile before a divine status could be attributed to the Son (cf. *ibid.* 97ff.). since the foundations, the rudiments and the groundwork for such a binitarian view of the Godhead were already laid and existing in the Judaisms of the first century. Though the dating of much of the rabbinic texts is extremely difficult, the Philonic, Qumran and Wisdom literatures are evidence of the early existence of these foundations (see Appendix). There is a reasonably high probability, contrary to Casey's hypothesis, that in the development of his christology the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was drawing on an early common Jewish tradition.

In this v.3a and in these opening verses generally of the Epistle, the author points conclusively to the distinct eternal divine status and being of the Son and at the same time his oneness with the Father. Young, referring to the Greek Commentaries on Hebrews, immediately preceding the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), says, 'All the commentators use chapter i to prove against the Arians that Christ is greater than the angels and is in fact ὁμοούσιος τῷ Πατρί. All heretics who do not understand this formula correctly, Sabellians along with Arians, are suitably dealt with' (Young, 1969, 151).

These opening verses, on the one hand, suggest that not only the adoptionist and kenotic solutions do not solve the christological problem of Hebrews, but also the Arian. On the other hand, these verses indicate that the orthodox solution stands closest to the christology of Hebrews. For Hebrews, the Son is God sharing the same eternal essence of the Father. The Messiah's divine glory, power, status and essence is such that they could not be obtained through creation even before time begun or through adoption nor put aside in an act of kenosis without doing divine damage to the Godhead and effecting the demise of the universe. The Son, for our author, is no less than 'God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God' (Socrates, 1:8 [p. 11]).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SON CALLED GOD

πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν·

*ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος,
καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς ἐνθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου.
ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν·
διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός σου
ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου.*

(Heb. 1:8-9)

The most important issue before us in this chapter is how should this citation from Ps. 44:6 LXX [=MT 45:7] be read. Does the author of Hebrews actually apply ὁ θεός to the messianic Son or should the verse be translated differently?

This Royal Psalm 45, which is unique in the Psalter in that it is a royal wedding hymn for some Israelite king (cf. Mowinckel, 1:74), is not quoted anywhere else in the NT, though Moffatt thinks that there may be a possible reminiscence of it in Rev. 6:2. (Moffatt, 13). The importance of translating this citation from the psalm correctly cannot be overstated, for it could well be, as Harris claims, that v.8a is the pivot for this crucial opening chapter (cf. Harris, 1985, 156). The quotation in Hebrews is very close to the LXX of Ps. 44:6 which in turn is a close translation of the MT Ps. 45:7.

*ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ Θεὸς εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος,
ῥάβδος ἐνθύτητος ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου.*

פְּסָאֵךְ אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד שֶׁבֶט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁבֶט מְלִכּוּתְךָ:

The καὶ at the beginning of the second stichos in Heb. 1:8b probably functions more as a simple connecting link than a wedge while marking a division of the single citation into two distinct parts (cf. the use καί in Heb. 2:13; 10:30 and 10:37-38). Thus it allows the one quotation to make two distinct but complementary points regarding the person being addressed: the eternalness of his reign (v.8a) and the scrupulous uprightness of his rule (v.8b) (cf. Westcott, 26; Moffatt, 13 n.1). There is, however, a significant variant reading in the second stichos of the text in our Epistle where the reading αὐτοῦ for the second σου in 1:8b has proto-Alexandrian support (P46 & B). The variant reading is important since, as we shall see further on, the third person pronoun αὐτοῦ at least favours a nominative translation of v.8a, whereas the second person pronoun σου accords better with a vocative translation. The variant reading αὐτοῦ could be claimed to be the more difficult reading because it differs from the LXX and the MT (מְלִכִּיָּהּ) and creates an awkward transition from ὁ θρόνος σου (v.8a) to ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ (v.8b). If αὐτοῦ is original, the insertion of καί might be explained as an attempt to ease the transition from the second to the third person. Because of the strong witness of P46 & B, the scribal tendency to use σου to avoid difficulties of interpretation, and the tendency to retain σου as found in the LXX, Thomas accepts this variant reading as the original one of our text and claims that such a combination of witnesses portray the original

reading in 11 other instances of minority readings in Hebrews (cf. Thomas, 305 n.5; cf also Bruce, 1964, 10 n.45; Montefiore, 1964, 47).

However, there is much to favour the reading of σου. The external evidence is ancient (A D Ψ 0121b, the majority of minuscules, latt sy co) and unlike that for αὐτοῦ it is widely distributed geographically (cf. Harris, 1985, 137). Moreover, it agrees with the LXX which is being cited and accords with the four other instances of the use of the second person singular pronoun (σε or σου) in the citation (cf. 1:8-9). In the LXX of Ps. 45, there is no other instance of αὐτοῦ, whereas σου occurs 12 times at the end of a phrase or sentence in vv. 3-12. Moreover, it could be argued that σου may have been changed to αὐτοῦ because of ὁ θεός being taken as a nominative (either subject or predicate). Also even if καὶ was inserted to ease the transition between the second and third person, the transition is, as Harris says, 'decidedly awkward' (Harris, 1985, 137), whereas the parallelism between the two distinct parts of the quotation in v.8a and v.8b favour the matching of ὁ θρόνος σου with τῆς βασιλείας σου. Metzger points out that the majority of the Editorial Committee of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament was more impressed '(a) by the weight and variety of the external evidence supporting σου, and (b) by the internal difficulty of construing αὐτοῦ' (Metzger, 1971 1975 662f.). In light of all this the weight of probability tends towards the second person being the more original.

Probably the most controversial and crucial part of our text concerns the first stichos of Heb. 1:8 and in particular the phrase ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεός of v.8a. The interpretation both of the Hebrew psalm and the Greek translation of this line has proved considerably controversial. If ὁ θεός is taken as nominative (subject or predicative), then the translation is 'God is your throne' or 'Your throne is God'.¹ No English version has the translation 'Your throne is God' and very few commentators (Hort and Nairne are exceptions) support it (cf. Harris, 1985, 139 n.31). Most proponents of the nominative sense of ὁ θεός prefer 'God is your throne' (cf. Westcott, 24, 25f.; Moffatt, 11, 13f.; Robinson, 1933, 10; Thomas, 1964-65, 305; Milligan, 90f. but cf. 77 n.1). However, in an Epistle where the Son is constantly portrayed as sitting at God's right hand (1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2), these translations as Meier says, do 'not make terribly good sense in the context of the theology of Hebrews' (Meier, 514). Also as Westcott acknowledges, 'The phrase "God is Thy throne" is not indeed found elsewhere' (Westcott, 26). Turner dismissed this translation for Heb. 1:8 as a 'grotesque interpretation which obscures the godhead of Jesus' (Turner, 15). Moreover, if ὁ θεός were a subject nominative (i.e. 'God is your throne'), one might have expected the word order ὁ θεός ὁ θρόνος σου to avoid any ambiguity of subject. Alternatively, if ὁ θεός were a predicate nominative ('Your throne is God'), one might have

¹ Moffatt believes that this rendering was possibly responsible for the variant reading of αὐτοῦ after βασιλείας in v.8b (cf. Moffatt, 13).

expected ὁ θρόνος σου θεός or ὁ θρόνος σου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος θεός (cf. Harris, 143). In addition, Harris claims that ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεός cannot mean 'your divine throne' (which would require ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεῖος), or 'your throne is divine' (which would require ὁ θρόνος σου θεῖος) or even 'your throne is God's throne' (which would require ὁ θρόνος σου τοῦ θεοῦ) (cf. *ibid.* 138 n.28).

If we take ὁ θεός as a vocative, the translation is 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever'. This is by far the best translation of the text and thus it is preferred. Allis maintains that this 'is the natural rendering of the Greek as it is of the Hebrew' (Allis, 259). The word order favours the vocative; a vocative immediately after the second person pronoun σου would be perfectly natural and the σου at end of the second stichos which we have already agreed on accords better with the vocative. Also Harris, after analysing five proposed translations of Ps. 45:7a, concluded that the traditional rendering 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever' was not only defensible but remained the most satisfactory solution to the exegetical problems posed by the verse (cf. Harris, 1985, 142).

Briggs notes that all the versions regard אֱלֹהִים of Ps. 45:7 as vocative (cf. Briggs, 1.387). Also Day writing in 1992, considered the rendering of the Hebrew of Ps. 45:7, 'Your throne is like God's for ever and ever', and an alternative rendering which is supported by Mulder and Metinger, 'Your throne is God's for ever and ever' (cf. Allen 230; Metinger, 273), and concluded that

the more natural way of taking אֱלֹהִים is as a vocative (cf. Day, 104). It is true that the form ὁ θεός is nominative, and not the vocative θεέ but this should cause no real difficulty. In Aquila's revision of the LXX the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים is translated as θεέ thus making quite explicit the vocative nature of the quotation (cf. Attridge, 58; Westcott, 25). The vocative θεέ occurs rarely in the LXX and only in Matt. 27:46 in the NT; elsewhere is ὁ θεός used as the vocative (cf. Meier, 514 n.29) and the use of the nominative for the vocative is fairly common in classical Greek (cf. Blass & Debrunner, sect. 147, p. 81f.; Zerwick & Grosvenor, 655). The weight of scholarly opinion today favours the vocative rendering which appears to have been the rendering since the early centuries (cf. Moffatt, 13; Héring, 10; Lindsay, 1:61f.; Turner, 15; Bruce, 1964, 19; Montefiore, 1964, 47; Brown, 1965, 562; Hughes, 1977, 64; Wilson, 1987, 41; Attridge, 58f. Lane, 1991, 30; etc.).

Commentators are also divided over how to interpret 1:9. We must ask, What is the significance of this verse? Why does the author continue the citation, there being no grammatical link with v.8? Can it be that we have a reference to the Son's appointment and exaltation in the anointing of the Son with the oil of gladness above his μέτοχοι (cf. Attridge, 60)? Moffatt and Lane believe that the term μέτοχοι refers to the angels and that the context of the passage appears to support this (cf. Moffatt, 14, Lane, 1991, 30). If this is the real significance of the verse, then its thrust is a further contrast between the Son and the angels in the use of μέτοχοι with possibly the fellow members

of the heavenly court in mind. Against this understanding is the fact that angels are not anointed and they are nowhere else described as the Messiah's μέτοχοι, a term used in the Epistle for believers (cf. Heb. 3:1, 14; 6:4; Hughes, 1977, 66). The inferiority of the angels to the Son is so insisted on that the author is hardly likely to describe them as his 'fellows' (cf. Bruce, 1964, 21). On the other hand, to intend a comparison of the Son with believers here is completely out of context. Therefore, I inclined to believe that author has no strong views on who the μέτοχοι are and that this is merely an extension of the citation. The thrust and purpose of the verse is rather to be found in the double ὁ θεός which continues explicitly the dialogue of divine persons which is found implicitly in earlier citations (cf. Illingworth, 1993, 124). Westcott takes the first ὁ θεός as a nominative and the second ὁ θεός as being in apposition (cf. Westcott, 27). However, the vocative in v.8a earlier in the same citation strongly favours a vocative rendering for the first ὁ θεός in v.9. Moreover, Montefiore maintains 'The Hebrew text of the Psalm is best translated "God, even thy God, has anointed thee' (Montefiore, 1964, 47). This binitarian view of the Godhead is consistent with the opening verses of the chapter, especially v.3a. The purpose, therefore, of continuing the citation is to further demonstrate and prove that the Son is ὁ θεός.

Conclusion

In Heb. 1:8-9, the Son is unmistakably aligned with God as divine King in stark contrast to, and over against the angels, who function in a

subordinate role as messengers and ministers. The whole point of the two verses is to show that the Son's superiority to the angels is based on his divine nature; that as $\acute{\omicron}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, the Son has a royal and lasting authority in contrast to the angels. The vocative rendering of $\acute{\omicron}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ in Heb. 1:8 yields an excellent sense for a writer who wanted to highlight the divine significance of the Messiah in comparison to angels. It is a comparison though from greatness to greatness; from the, albeit limited and finite greatness of angels to an unlimited and infinite greatness of the divine Son. There is no need to belittle, deride or to denigrate the status of angels to show the superiority of the Son; the status of being God speaks for itself and shows the Messiah to be a completely different and infinitely higher class of Being compared to that of angels, however exalted some of them may be.

The king in Ps. 45:7 is addressed as Elohim but despite his greatness, this psalm, like the other Royal Psalms, points beyond the Davidic dynasty to the deity of the coming King Messiah and this is reflected by the Messianic interpretation which the psalm is given in Judaism: the T. Judah 24:1 has a messianic use of Ps. 45:5, and possibly of v.3 in 24:3 and v.7 in 24:5-6; R. Eliezer (c. 80-120 AD) discusses whether there would be weapons in the messianic age on the basis of Ps. 45:4 (cf. B. Shab. 63a); Gen. R. 99:8 cites Ps. 45:7a in connection with the messianic Judah oracle of Gen. 49:10 (cf, Trg. Onk. Gen. 49:10; Gen. R. 98:8). The Targum of Ps. 45 explicitly refers v.3 to the King Messiah, but applies v.7 to God. However, the context of the psalm and the use of the second person in vv. 5-6, and again in v.8 in the MT militate

against the verse being interpreted as a reference to God but rather support the king as the addressee. It is only insomuch as the Davidic king of Israel was a type of the Divine Messiah King and foreshadowed him that he could be addressed as God since ultimately it was the Messiah who was being addressed and praised.

In the application of Ps. 45:7 to the Son, the author of Hebrews is only making explicit what elsewhere in the chapter, and especially in 1:3a, is implicit, namely, that the Messiah is God, pre-existent and eternal; that there was never when he was not.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SON OF MAN

5. Οὐ γὰρ ἀγγέλοις ὑπέταξεν τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν.

6. διεμαρτύρατο δὲ πού τις λέγων·

τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ὅτι μνηύσκη αὐτοῦ,

ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὅτι ἐπισκέπη αὐτόν;

7. ἡλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους,

δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν,

8. πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ.

ἐν τῷ γὰρ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα οὐδὲν ἀφῆκεν αὐτῷ ἀνυπότακτον.

Νῦν δὲ οὕτω ὁρῶμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα·

9. τὸν δὲ βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἡλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν

διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον, ὅπως χάριτι θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσεται θανάτου.

(Heb. 2:5-9)

In this seminal midrash¹ on Psalm 8:4-6 (LXX; MT 8:5-7), there are two issues of particular interest to this thesis. First, Who is the υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου here in Hebrews? Secondly, if the author is applying the Psalm messianically, How Jewish was this interpretation?

Who is the Son of Man?

For this quotation from Ps. 8, the author has employed the LXX and, except for the omission of the clause 'and didst set him over the works of thy

¹ Cf. Lane, 1991 43; Kistemaker, 1991 12.

hands,' the whole quotation is word-for-word identical to the LXX. The Psalm in its own context was probably viewed as 'a panegyric on man' (Moffatt, 22). It is likely that 'son of man' was for the psalmist synonymous with man in general as he marvels at the power which God has given to him in setting him over the works of His hands (cf. Gen. 1:28), but to whom does the author of Hebrews apply the words of the psalm? A number of scholars believe that the author of Hebrews is also referring to man's status, albeit in the world to come rather than in this world (cf. Westcott, 41ff.; Robinson, 1973, 159f.). Moffatt states quite categorically, 'neither here nor elsewhere does he [the author of Hebrews] use the term "Son of Man"' (Moffatt, 23). However, whatever the psalmist had in mind when he composed Ps. 8, for the author of Hebrews it is not primarily a meditation on the lofty status of humanity in creation, but a messianic oracle that describes the humiliation and the exaltation of the Son, as Heb. 2:9 makes clear. The dominant role of the messianic interpretation of Ps. 110:1 in the previous doctrinal section, namely, 1:1-14 where it is alluded to in 1:3a and forms the final citation in the catena, prepares the way for, and supports, this messianic interpretation of Ps. 8. Moreover, in this chapter the author still has the comparison of the Son with the angels in mind (cf. Cullmann, 1959, 188; Kistemaker, 1961, 103).

The major difference between the LXX, which Hebrews follows closely, and the MT is the translation of אֱלֹהִים. Later versions of the Greek OT (cf. Aquila, Symmachus, and others) and a number of modern commentators (cf. Perowne, 1:155; Craigie, 105, 108) have 'God' in Ps. 8:5, but commentators

such as Dahood and Briggs prefer 'gods' (cf. Dahood, 1:48; Briggs 1906 1978 64). So the LXX translation of אֱלֹהִים by ἀγγέλους may well be correct as 'gods' included angels. At any rate, the LXX is supported by the Targum, Syriac and Vulgate versions of the OT, and by the Jewish commentators, Rashi, Kimchi and Aben-Ezra (cf. Westcott, 44; Craigie, 108). This translation of the LXX is particularly suitable for the author of our Epistle. Having already in chapter one used the angels as a foil to highlight the divinity of the Son, the author of Hebrews proceeds further to use the angels as a foil to highlight the Son's assumption of human nature, his solidarity with, and his messianic role with regard to mankind, not angels, (cf. Heb. 2:16).

Most (if not all) of the psalm citations are envisioned by the author of Hebrews as messianic, as being the fulfilment of promise in the coming of the Son of God, and thus he interprets the general message expressed by Ps. 8 in light of God's ultimate revelation of the Messiah. He is not unique in the NT. According to Matt. 21:15-16, Jesus, after cleansing the Temple, was criticised by the chief priests and scribes for his apparent acceptance of the behaviour of the children who were shouting *Hosanna to the Son of David*; the authorities, being indignant, expected Jesus to calm this juvenile chorus, but he responded by quoting Ps. 8:2 [MT 3]: *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise*. That there was an existing Jewish messianic tradition of the psalm at the time is supported by the similar christological application of Ps. 8:6 (MT 7) in 1 Cor. 15:27 and Eph. 1:22. Interestingly, this messianic interpretation of the psalm is strengthened in these texts also by their close

connection with Ps. 110:1 (1 Cor. 15:25, 27; Eph. 1:20, 22).

Psalm 8 in Jewish Literature

According to the rabbis the angels employed the words of Ps. 8 to air their contempt for man at his creation and when Moses went up Mt Sinai to receive the Torah (cf. B. Sanh. 38b; Shab. 88b). Westcott claims that this psalm 'is not, and has never been accounted by the Jews to be, directly Messianic' (Westcott, 42). However, it is important to note that the author of Hebrews is not the only one to apply Ps. 8 to an individual. Rabbinic Judaism applies it to Moses (cf. B. Ned. 38a; RH 21b), to Abraham and to other patriarchal figures (cf. Mid. Ps. 8). Urbach thinks that the author of Hebrews here and in ch. 3 is applying to Jesus what was said concerning Moses, only in a 'Christological direction' (Urbach, 158f.). This is not an impossible hypothesis, considering how Ps. 8 is applied to Moses and the exalted status ascribed to him in Judaism generally. Consider, for example, the view of Moses expressed by Ezekiel the Tragedian in his play, *The Exagoge* (lines 68-89); a work that both Jacobson and van der Horst date before the Christian era (cf. Jacobson, 12, 55; van der Horst, 1983, 21, 23). In Ezekiel's drama, Moses has an extraordinary vision of his exaltation, as he is given a crown, a sceptre and told to sit on the great throne and enabled to see all the earth and heavens and count the stars (probably symbolising angels) which fall before his knees; his father-in-law, Raguel explains the dream by saying to Moses that the vision presages his future rule and prophetic knowledge (cf. Horbury, 1985, 42; also Philo, Mos. 1:158; Assum. Mos. 1:14; 3:12; 11:16; Mid. Ps. 90:5).

Though I am not convinced that these Moses traditions are the primary influence on Heb. 2:5-9, I cannot rule out a possible influence on the author, especially in light of the comparison that Hebrews makes between the Son and Moses in Heb. 3:1-6. What is significant, is Judaism's ability to accommodate in such grandiose terms an exalted human figure, albeit, identified as Moses. It certainly shows that the author of Hebrews' interpretation would not be regarded as out of the ordinary by Jews of his time.

Significantly, and contrary to Westcott, Francis J. Moloney considers the possible messianic influence of the Targum on Ps. 8 and in his article provides the reader with a translation of the Walton Polyglot version of this Targum on Ps. 8.

The Targum (Walton version),

- 1. To be sung on the lyre which he brought from Gath, a psalm of David.**
- 2. O Lord, God our Master, how majestic is thy name,
and worthy of honour in all the earth.
Thou whose glory above the heavens is chanted**
- 3. by the mouth of babes and infants.
Thou hast founded a bulwark because of thy foes,
to destroy the author of enmity and the violent one.**
- 4. When I look at the heavens, the works of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars which thou hast arranged,**
- 5. What is the Son of Man (bar nāshā') that thou art mindful of his works
and the Son of Man (bar nāshā') that thou dost care for him?**
- 6. And thou hast made him a little less than the angels
and dost crown him with glory and honour.**
- 7. Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands,
thou hast put all things under his feet,**
- 8. all sheep and oxen and also the beasts of the field,**
- 9. the birds of the air and the fish of the sea
and the Leviathan which passes along the paths of the sea**
- 10. O Lord, God our Master, how majestic is thy name,
and worthy of honour in all the earth.**

(Francis J. Moloney, 1980-81, 661)

Some of the more important differences noted by Moloney (cf. *ibid.* 662) between the Targum and the MT include:

- a. The foes of God are individualised. The MT's 'to still the enemy and avenger' has become 'to destroy the author of enmity and the ^{violent} ~~violet~~ one' (v. 3) (cf. Heb. 2:14f.).
- b. The generic term 'man' (MT אָנוּשׁ) is individualised to a specific 'the Son of Man' (v. 5a).
- c. God is not only mindful of 'man' but of the 'works' (v. 5b) of the Son of Man.
- d. There is a further use of 'Son of Man' in v. 5c, though this could be easily explained as the normal translation of the original Hebrew בֶּן-אָדָם but given the change in v. 5a and the reference to 'his works' in v. 5b, Moloney thinks that 'it probably means a lot more than the original Hebrew ever intended'.
- e. The Leviathan is included as one of the beasts 'under the feet' of the Son of Man (v. 9).

Moloney acknowledges Vermes' explanation that the Hebrew בֶּן-אָדָם is rendered in the Targums to the Prophets and Writings as *bar nāshā'* (cf. Vermes, 1967, 316), but notes that he failed to point out that in the Targum of Ps. 8:6 [MT 6] there are two appearances of *bar nāshā'* and importantly, omits to mention the fact that the generic אָנוּשׁ, without an article is translated into a specific *bar nāshā'* in the emphatic state (cf. Moloney, 1980-81, 663). In addition, Moloney is impressed with the inclusion in the Targum of the Leviathan which was a symbol of the primeval forces of evil and chaos that is to appear at the end of this present age, only to suffer a second and final defeat (cf. Enoch 1:40:7-9; 4 Ezra 6:49-53; 2 Bar. 29:3-8; all the Targums on Gen. 3:15; Moloney, 1980-81, 664). Moloney sees the Targum as introducing the apocalyptic 'beast' by the use of the Leviathan (*ibid.* 664). This eschatological note and the process of individualisation going on in the Targum, both of the

'son of man' and the enemies of God, convinces Moloney that the Targum is translating the psalm messianically. Apart from the negative use of **בֶּן-אָדָם** in Ps. 146:3, Ps. 80 is the only other place where **בֶּן-אָדָם** is used in the psalms, and there we find a striking parallel which supports Moloney's position.

וְעַל-בֶּן אֲמַצְתָּה לָּהּ: וְכִנָּה אֲשֶׁר-נָטַעַה יְמִינִךָ

And the root which your right hand has planted, and upon the son that you have made strong for yourself.

(Ps. 80:15 [MT 16])

תְּהִי-יָדְךָ עַל-אִישׁ יְמִינִךָ וְעַל-בֶּן-אָדָם אֲמַצְתָּ לָּהּ:

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, and upon the son of man that you have made strong for yourself.

(Ps. 80:17 [MT 18])

In Ps. 80:15, (MT 16), the versions (LXX, Syriac and Vulgate) add ἀνθρώπου to **עַל-בֶּן** possibly influenced by v.17 (MT 18), but Moloney thinks that 'Although this is not found in any of the Hebrew witnesses, given the versions, it may well have been in the Targumist's Hebrew *Vorlage*' (Moloney, 1980-81, 665). In fact, in light of the LXX, Syriac and Vulgate readings, McNeil believes that the evidence points to a Hebrew text which read **בֶּן-אָדָם** in both verses and that the deletion of **אָדָם** in v.16 (possibly through carelessness by the editors of the MT) was a second stage (McNeil, 420; cf. Horbury, 1985, 48f.). In any case the Targum on this passage is strikingly messianic:

**15. O God of hosts, turn now, look down from heaven and see,
and remember this vine in mercy,**

16. and the stock which thy right hand has planted

and upon the King Messiah that thou hast made strong for thyself.

18. Let thy hand be upon the man

whom thou hast established with thy right hand,

upon the Son of Man ['al bar nāsh]

whom thou hast made strong for thyself.

(Trg. Ps. 80. cf. Moloney, 1980-81, 665).

Moloney has argued a good case for a messianic interpretation of Ps. 8 in the Targum, and if the dating of it is as suggested in ch. 1 when I discussed the Targum to the Psalms, then he has made a significant contribution to our understanding of Ps. 8 and to the assignation 'Son of Man' in the first half of the first century AD, and it would mean that the controversy on the titular use of the 'Son of Man' is far from over.

Heb. 2:9

This v.9 has been referred to throughout this thesis; it is a significant verse but it harbours textual and exegetical difficulties. There is in Heb. 2:9 what some see as an awkward construction διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον, ὅπως χάριτι θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσεται θανάτου. There are a number of theories which Moffatt lists that see δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον as referring to the Messiah's life prior to death, either (i) to his pre-incarnate existence, when 'in the counsels of heaven', he was as it were, 'crowned for death' or (ii) to his incarnate life, as if his readiness to die vicariously already 'threw a halo round him' or (iii) to God's specific recognition and approval of him at his baptism and transfiguration (cf. Moffatt, 25). Moffatt correctly sees the use of δόξα in v.10 as counting

against such theories. The crowning with glory and honour of the Incarnate Son and the subjection of all things in v.8 would appear to be an allusion to Ps. 110:1, to the 'sitting at God's right hand' (as we have already argued above) which only followed as a consequence of his sacrificial work (cf. Heb.1:3; 10:12; 12:2). Moffatt regards δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον 'as almost parenthetical, rounding off the quotation from the psalm' (Moffatt, 25). As the construction stands it would appear that the suffering of death was not only the reason for the Son's humiliation, but the ground also of his exaltation, and if the ὅπως clause is not a gloss as O'Neill maintains (O'Neill, 1966, 81), it would appear to be highlighting the vicarious nature of that death; an amplification as it were, of the 'suffering of death' clause (cf. Hughes, 1977, 90). Lane suggests that the δόξη καὶ τιμῇ 'recalls the investiture of Aaron to the high priesthood, when God bestowed upon him "glory and splendour" (Exod 28:2, 40 LXX)' (Lane, 1991, 49).

There is a significant textual variation in v.9, which Moffatt calls the 'hardest knot of the hard passage' (Moffatt, 26). Instead of χάριτι θεοῦ which is strongly supported by good representatives of both the Alexandrian and the Western MSS (cf. P⁴⁶ κ A B C D 33 81 330 614 it vg cop^{sa}, bo, fay al), a large number of the Fathers, both Eastern and Western, as well as 0121b, 424^c, 1739*, vg^{ms} syr^{pmss} read χωρὶς θεοῦ (cf. Metzger, 664). Both forms of the text were current in the second century. Origen was unwilling to rule out χάριτι θεοῦ but preferred χωρὶς θεοῦ (Origen, in Joan. i. 35; cf. Moffatt,

25ff.). Most commentators appear to favour the χάριτι θεοῦ reading (cf. Bruce, 1964, 40; Westcott, 62; Elliott, 1971-71, 339). Theophylact and Oecumenius believed that the Nestorians invented the reading χωρὶς θεοῦ (cf. ibid. 341). Metzger suggests that this reading may have arisen through a scribal lapse, misreading χάριτι for χωρὶς or more likely, it resulted from a marginal gloss (suggested by 1 Cor 15:27) to explain that 'everything' of Heb. 2:8 did not include God; a later transcriber erroneously viewing the gloss as a correction introduced it into the text (cf. Metzger, 664; Tasker, 1954-55, 184). However, Montefiore argues that χωρὶς θεοῦ 'is to be preferred on both the grounds of intrinsic probability and on the principle of *difficilior lectio potior*' (Montefiore, 1964, 59). He points out that the word χωρὶς is used twelve times elsewhere in the Epistle and thinks that it 'might either have been corrupted into χάριτι through misunderstanding or substituted for reasons of reverence or orthodoxy' (ibid.). Montefiore regards χάριτι θεοῦ as a 'bald phrase, not particularly suited to the context and uncharacteristic of our author' (ibid.). Theodore of Mopsuestia condemned χάριτι θεοῦ as alien to the argument of Hebrews (cf. Elliott, 1971-72, 339). Certainly χωρὶς θεοῦ does appear the more difficult reading, and so more likely to be changed to the more innocuous and easily understood reading of χάριτι θεοῦ than vice versa. Moreover, the style and usage of the author of Hebrews favours χωρὶς θεοῦ. Elliott notes that χωρὶς is always followed by an anarthrous noun in Hebrews which is the

norm for the NT as a whole (cf. *ibid.*). On the other hand, the anarthrous $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\iota\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ does not conform to the author's usage in Hebrews in particular (cf. Heb. 12:15) or to the norm in the NT¹ (cf. *ibid.*).

However, even if we accept the probability that $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ is the original reading this still leaves us with the problem of how to understand it. The phrase carries the sense of 'apart from God' or 'separated from God'. Theodore of Mopsuestia argued that the words were intended to show the impassibility of the Godhead; in tasting death, the Son was without God (cf. Elliott, 1971-72, 340; also, Ambrose, *de Fide* 5:105 [p. 297]). Elliott argues 'that $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ was original to our author and meant that Christ in his death was separated from God....Jesus at his death is $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ because he entered, albeit temporarily, the realm of Satan which is death' (Elliott, 1971-72, 340; Lane, 1991, 43). But the descent of Jesus into Satan's kingdom is not a valid argument for such a separation, since it exalts unnecessarily the devil, as if he had an independency of God and was able to maintain a 'no-go area', so that the Creator could not enter his creature's kingdom; from Ps. 139:8, we learn that God's presence is even in לִשְׁכַּת שְׁאוֹל (sheol). Moreover, the idea of 'separate from God' could suggest that the union of the divine and the human natures was severed in the atonement; yet it was that union which made Jesus' perfect sacrifice so valuable and so effective (cf. Heb. 9:15; 10:29). Weiss, Harnack²

¹ There are two exceptions in the NT, namely, 1 Cor. 15:10^a and 2 Cor. 1:12.

² B. Weiss, A. Harnack *Studien zur Geschichte des NT* 1:235f., Berlin 1931 (cf. Hughes, 1977, 96).

and Zuntz¹ have argued the originality of χωρὶς θεοῦ, but in the sense that when the Messiah tasted death for everyone he did so 'separated from God' - that is, his death was a God-forsaken one, in line with his cry of dereliction on the cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Mk. 15:34). However, Tasker observes, 'the writer would have expressed this thought more naturally by κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ θεοῦ' (Tasker, 1954-55, 184). O'Neill rejects the idea 'that Jesus suffered without involving his Godhead...[or] that he died without God' (O'Neill, 1966, 79). He argues that the preposition χωρὶς has a common meaning 'far from' (cf. Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, 899), thus giving the sense in v.9c of, 'in order that far from God he might taste death for everyone' (cf. O'Neill, 1966, 79-82). This seems a reasonable translation, reflecting the condescension and humiliation of the Son in his Incarnation. It is also a translation that would support a spatial understanding of βραχύ τι. Both the Hebrew word **נִצָּל** and its Greek equivalent βραχύ τι have a spatial and a temporal sense; therefore it may not be an *either - or* situation here since the two nuances apply to the Messiah because it was only for 'a little while' he was 'made lower' than the angels. The German translation of the text captures both senses:

**Du hast ihn eine kurze Zeit erniedrigt,
ihn niedriger sein lassen als die Engel.**

Hughes, 1977, 96).

¹ G. Zuntz *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum*, 34, London 1953 (cf. Hughes, 1977, 96).

However, while allowing for both senses in the text, this thesis tends to emphasise the spatial sense here, especially of degree between the divine and human; by taking on himself the 'seed of Abraham' (cf. Heb. 2:16) and bearing the sin of Adam's race (ibid. 2:17f.; 2 Cor. 5:21), the Son was adopting a life form not just a little lower than the angels but infinitely far below that of God, thus reflecting the great condescension involved in the Incarnation and crucifixion. The author uses the Semitism γεύσεται θανάτου to allude to the harsh reality of Jesus' vicarious, violent death on the cross (cf. Lane, 1991, 49). It is, as Johannes Behm says, 'a graphic expression of the hard and painful reality of dying which is experienced by man and which was suffered also by Jesus' (Behm, TDNT, 1:677).

Conclusion

Though in one sense, it might be argued that Hebrews is introducing a new meaning to the psalm, something that is not evidently apparent in it, in another sense, Hebrews' interpretation is a natural development as a result of the tension in the psalm itself, for it is quite apparent that man is not crowned with honour and glory, nor is he as sovereign as the psalm would indicate. This tension allows Hebrews to interpret the psalm's fulfilment in terms of the 'world to come' which the Son has already inaugurated and to apply the reference 'Son of Man' to the Messiah, who is the guarantee of its fulfilment ultimately for his people.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE INCARNATE SON

οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται
ἀλλὰ σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ ἐπιλαμβάνεται.

(Heb. 2:16)

The translation of this verse has proved exceedingly contentious. Generally speaking, there are two main lines of interpretation. First, the author is understood as claiming that the Messiah does not assist angels but mankind, typified by the phrase σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ. Moffatt's translation, among others, is a prime example of this understanding: *For of course it is not angels that "he succours," it is "the offspring of Abraham"* (Moffatt, 28). Secondly, the author is viewed as affirming that the Messiah did not assume angelic but human nature, typified by the phrase σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ. The AV is a classic example of this approach to the verse: *For verily he took not on himself the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham*. The issue is that if the latter translation is correct then we have a clear statement regarding the pre-existence of the Son and of the union of his divine and human natures. If the words express that the Son appropriated human nature, it necessarily infers his pre-existence in another nature.

The prime difficulty lies with the translation of the verb ἐπιλαμβάνεται, the meaning of which continues to be disputed, occurring only in the middle voice in the LXX and the NT (cf. Bauer, 295). Literally it

means 'to take hold of', 'to grasp'. The sense in which the verb is used seems to be determined by the requirements of the context in which it occurs. For example, in the NT it is sometimes used in a friendly sense, sometimes in a hostile sense, of taking hold of a person (cf. Matt. 14:31; Lk. 9:47; 14:4; 23:26; Acts 9:27; 16:19; 17:19; 18:17; 21:30, 33). Three times it is used of taking hold of someone's hand, either literally or figuratively (cf. Mk. 8:23; Acts 23:19 and Heb. 8:9 where the author quotes the LXX Jer. 38:32 [MT 31:32]). In Lk. 20:20, 26 it is used in the sense of taking hold of Jesus' words, to seize his statements in a hostile manner, while in 1 Tim. 6:12, 19 it is found in the sense of taking hold of eternal life.

The Case for ἐπιλαμβάνεται = succours

The departure from the classical approach, reflected by the AV, to favour the weaker and more general sense, 'succours', probably dates from around the 17th century though it was Sebastian Castellio (1515-63), the sixteenth century scholar, who first pointed out what Moffatt calls 'the true meaning' (Moffatt, 37). Theodore Beza (1519-1605), the Calvinist theologian, called Castellio's opinion a piece of cursed impudence, *execranda Castellionis audacia qui ἐπιλαμβάνεται convertit 'opitulatur,' non modo falsa sed etiam inepta interpretatione* (cf. *ibid.*; Hughes, 1977, 116 n.116; Ellingworth, 1993, 177). Many modern scholars follow this understanding along with Moffatt, (i.e. cf. Westcott, 54f.; Lane, 1991, 51f., 63f.; Montefiore, 1964, 66f.; R. A. Knox, 1956, 55; Davidson, 71; Bruce, 1899, 121ff.; Ellingworth & Nida, 46; Michel,

162). Their judgment is reflected in many modern English versions:

For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants [NIV].
For assuredly it is not to angels that he reaches a helping hand
[Weymouth].
For verily not to angels doth he give help [ASV].
For of course it was not angels...that he came to help [Goodspeed].
After all, he does not make himself the angels' champion [Knox].

The RSV's translation 'For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham' probably belongs to this group. Bonus claims that though the verb ἐπιλαμβάνεται occurs nineteen times in the NT, and over fifty times in the OT and Apocrypha, 'in none of these places does the word mean 'assume' or 'take upon oneself' (Bonus, 234), while Westcott believes that the present tense of ἐπιλαμβάνεται supports the translation of 'help' by highlighting its 'continual efficacy' (cf. Westcott, 55). Probably the strongest support advocated for this translation of 'to help', 'to assist', 'to succour' for ἐπιλαμβάνεται, which Moffatt, Westcott, Bauer, Ronald Knox, Lane among others appeal to, is Sir. 4:11: 'Ἡ σοφία υἱοῦς ἑαυτῇ ἀνύψωσε, καὶ ἐπιλαμβάνεται τῶν ζητούντων αὐτήν'. Moffatt and Westcott also appeal to Isa. 41:8f. [LXX] where God reassures Israel: σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ...Οὗ ἀντελαβόμεν.

The Case for ἐπιλαμβάνεται = *assume*

There are significant difficulties with the translation of 'to help' or 'to assist' for ἐπιλαμβάνεται which I regard as weakening the meaning of the verb (cf. Simpson, 1946, 27ff.). There seems to me to be good evidence for

retaining the sense 'take hold of'. Of the nineteen places in the NT where the verb ἐπιλαμβάνεται occurs, only three have any connection with the intent of 'helping' (cf. Matt. 14:31; Mk. 8:23; Heb. 8:9). Even in these cases the idea of 'helping' does not reside in the verb, which retains its normal meaning to 'take hold of', but in the clearly expressed purpose in the immediate context of the taking hold or grasping. In Matt. 14:31 Jesus stretches out his hand and grasps Peter in order to save him. Mk. 8:23 depicts Jesus taking hold of the blind man to lead him out of the village and, in Heb. 8:9, God is figuratively represented as taking His people by the hand to lead them out of the house of bondage.

Against the relatively modern translation of 'to assist' or 'to succour' for ἐπιλαμβάνεται stands the ancient support for the classical translation 'to assume' or 'to appropriate'. The fathers of the early church, both Greek and Latin (e.g. Chrysostom, Ambrose, Theodoret, and Oecumenius, [cf. Attridge, 1989, 94 n.174]), and Calvin, in the Reformation, interpreted ἐπιλαμβάνεται in our passage as descriptive of the Son's assumption (appropriating or taking to himself) human nature in the Incarnation. Chrysostom (c. 347-407), Bishop of Constantinople, whose competency in the Greek language, that Bonus admits (cf. Bonus, 235), should be beyond dispute, says:

Τί ἐστὶν ὃ φησὶν; Οὐκ ἀγγέλου φύσιν ἀνεδέξατο, ἀλλ' ἀνθρώπου. Τί δὲ ἐστὶν ἐπιλαμβάνεται; Οὐκ ἐκείνης, φησὶν, ἐδράξατο τῆς φύσεως τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας.

(Chrysostom, *Hom. on Heb.* 5:1 [p. 388]; cf. Bonus, 235)

What does he affirm? He affirms that he does not embrace angel, but man. But what is ἐπιλαμβάνεται? It does not affirm that he laid hold of the essence of angels, but of us.

Ambrose (c. 339-97), Bishop of Milan, says that “He took upon Him the seed of Abraham” plainly asserting the begetting of a body....He a priest...took to Himself from the priestly nation’ (Ambrose, *De Fide* 3:86 [p. 255]). Hughes quotes Aquinas as saying that ‘nowhere do we read that he assumed angelic nature, but only “the seed of Abraham”, that is, human nature’ (cf. Hughes, 1977, 115f.). Erasmus, in the sixteenth century, explained that ‘Christ did not redeem the fallen angels, nor did he assume their nature’ (ibid. 116). The Reformers interpreted the verb in the same way (Calvin, 1963, 32).

Moreover, contrary to Bonus’s point above (cf. Bonus, 234), it seems to me that the idea of ‘assuming’ or ‘appropriating’ is not inconsistent with ‘taking hold of’. Delling defines the middle voice strictly to mean ‘a...“to grasp for oneself,” “to lay firm hold of” “to bring into one’s sphere” etc.; b. “to add to”’ (Kittel, TDNT, 4:9), all of which are consistent with the above classical translation of the verb. Also, contrary to Westcott’s point concerning the present sense of ἐπιλαμβάνεται (cf. Westcott, 55), it could just as much, and is more likely to, refer to the permanence of the union of the divine and the human natures on earth and in heaven. For if the humanity of the Messiah was a pre-requisite of his appointment as High Priest (cf. Heb. 2:17f.; 5:1-10) and the service in the Holy of Holies the unique work of OT high priest (cf. Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16:2; also Heb. 9:6-8; Sifra Lev. 7:1; B. Ber. 31b; Yoma 26b), then it stands to reason that when the Son entered the heavenly Sanctuary on behalf of his people (cf. Heb. 9:11f., 24), he did not relinquish his human nature since his

Priesthood is eternal, non-transferable and unchangeable (cf. Heb. 5:6, 10; 7:24ff.).

Bauer claims the verb ἐπιλαμβάνεται can carry the sense of 'help' figuratively (cf. Bauer, 295). However, his Lexicon seems to be merely reflecting this modern interpretation since it is significant that in the whole of the LXX, the Apocrypha and the NT he can only list two very disputed texts, namely, Heb. 2:16 and Sir. 4:11, to support this figurative sense. In contrast, the sense of 'helping' is totally unrecognised by Liddell and Scott's Lexicon. Moreover, the Greek text of Sir. 4:11 can be construed differently from that which many modern scholars have put forward as support for translating ἐπιλαμβάνεται 'to help' or 'to assist' in Hebrews (cf. Simpson, 1946, 27f.). Neither of the two uses of ἐπιλαμβάνεται or its cognates in Ezek. 41:6 and 1Kgs. 6:6 [LXX] support the sense of 'assist'. On the basis of Ezek. 41:6 which employs ἐπιλαμβανομένοις it might be argued that 'Wisdom takes hold of those that seek her' which is not unlike Attridge's translation of Sir. 4:11: 'Wisdom exalts her sons and grasps on to those who seek her' (Attridge, 1989, 94 n.176). Significantly, in 1Kgs. 6:6 the LXX employs the present subjunctive middle plural of ἐπιλαμβάνεται, namely, ἐπιλαμβάνονται ~~to~~ to translate the Hebrew word יָחַז which in the qal means 'takes hold' of, 'grasp', but also carries the sense of being 'attached to' or 'fastened to' especially in the hophal (the causative passive) voice (cf. 2 Chron. 9:18; DCH 1:186f.; BDB 28). It is used here of the walls of a house being attached or fastened to chambers. Applying

this sense to Sir. 4:11 we obtain the reasonable sense of 'Wisdom being united with those who seek her.'

Concerning the allusion to Isa. 41:8f. [LXX] in our text which Moffatt and Westcott with Buchanan, Peterson and Braun have detected, the change of verb (i.e. ἀντελάβετο) does not help their case (cf. Attridge, 1989, 94 n.175). It is strange that if the author of Hebrews had this OT text in mind and meant the sense to 'help' he should waive the use of a word proper to that sense (i.e. ἀντελάβετο) and make use of another which signifies no such thing.

This modern translation also has trouble being consistent with its context, which may account for some scholars giving it a parenthetical character (cf. Moffatt, Lane). The idea of helping the brethren has already been stressed in the immediate preceding verses and to repeat it again in our verse seems to be labouring the obvious. Bruce recognises the force of this objection and lamely explains that the readers 'had to be coaxed like children to engage in the most elementary process of thought on the subject' (Bruce, 1899, 122). Besides, the author comes shortly to speak of the Messiah as the One who helps his brethren in their hour of need (cf. v.18). Moreover, could anyone ever have imagined that the Son came to earth for the purpose of 'aiding' angels. It was hardly likely that the readers would expect that someone 'made a little lower than the angels' would be of much help to these spiritual beings. If these angels were good ones they certainly did not stand in need of redemption or reconciliation to God or of being freed from death or the fear of it. If the angels were evil ones, then the author, having already affirmed in v.14f. that

the design of the Son was to destroy the devil, it borders on absurd superfluosness then to say in v.16, 'He does not help angels'.

Bonus relying on a Peshitta Syriac MSS, argues that the subject of our verse is not the Son but 'the fear of death' in v.15, giving the sense, 'For truly it [i.e. the fear of death, or death itself] doth not lay hold of [or seize] angels, but of the seed of Abraham it doth lay hold' (cf. Bonus, 235). However, since the subject both in the clause preceding v.16 and in the clause following is the Son, it is more than likely that he is the subject of v.16 as well.

Such an incarnational understanding is consistent with the context. In order to free his brethren from the fear, power and dominion of death (vv. 14f.), the Son had to live in human conditions, die a vicarious human death and be like his brethren in all respects (with the exception of sin [cf. Heb. 4:15]) in order to become a faithful High Priest to God for his people (vv. 17f.). However, before he could do this, he had to assume human nature since death had to be beaten at its own game, it had to be conquered from within. The Messiah could not save what he was not; 'For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved' (Gregory of Nazianz *205 Ep.* 101 [p. 440]). Moreover, the idea of 'taking hold of' human nature reflects the sovereignty of the Son; it was no accident or coincidence that the Messiah should become human, but rather a deliberate policy and act (cf. Heb. 10:5-10). Throughout the Epistle the Son is depicted as being in control; there is just no question about Satan's ultimate demise and the ultimate deliverance of the children given to the Son by God (cf. Heb. 2:13-15);

each stage in the redemption plan has taken or will take place at the appointed time (cf. Heb. 10:37).

The question arises, Why the mention of angels here? It might be argued that the author is guarding against a possible identification of the Son with the angelic deliverers. However, the author of the Epistle has already dealt decisively with that issue in Chapter one. It is possible that the author is saying that the Son was not taking on αἵματος καὶ σαρκός (cf. v.14) in the way that some angels assumed them for a season in their apparitions in the OT (cf. Gen. 18), but that he really became a member of the human race. However, while not excluding this as an objective of the author, the mention of angels in our verse is probably a reference to Heb. 2:5ff. Unlike this world (cf. Dt. 32:8 [LXX]; Eph. 2:2; Heb. 2:14f.; B. BB 16a) the 'world to come' is not in subjection to angels but to the Son of Man and his brethren because the Son has assumed their nature and not that of angels.¹ By the divine Son assuming human nature, an act of pure grace and totally undeserved by the beneficiaries, he has united humanity to God and thus he has lifted the status of the heirs of salvation far above that of angels who have become their ministers (cf. Heb. 1:14).

Conclusion

Despite the plausibility of the translation of 'to help' or 'to assist' for the

¹ The Targumist, Jonathan ben Uzziel, speaks of 'the world to come of Messiah' (cf. Trg. Jon. 1 Kgs. 4:33).

verb ἐπιλαμβάνεται in Heb. 2:16, and the considerable support that it has among modern scholars, it is the opinion of this writer that it is far too weak to do justice to the verb, to the thrust of the verse and to its context. Though the patristic ^{writers} ~~fathers~~ were not infallible interpreters of the NT text, their knowledge of Greek which was much better than ours and their agreement in understanding the verb ἐπιλαμβάνεται as 'to appropriate' or 'to assume' is significant and of no small consequence for modern exegetes. I am of the opinion that they offer the best translation of the verse, taking account of both the verb and its context in Hebrews. By taking to himself the seed of Abraham, the Son became part of the human race, taking human nature to be his own and became truly man. Thus it is not to angels that he has given a controlling interest and inheritance in the *world to come*, but to his brethren, the many sons whom he has united to God and whom God will bring to glory through him (cf. Heb. 2:10ff.). Significantly, the verse affirms the pre-existence of the Messiah in another nature other than what he assumed. He *was* before he was incarnated; he subsisted before or else he could not have taken on him what he had not.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The main issue which I have attempted to deal with in this thesis is the christological problem of Hebrews, namely, the relationship between the language of pre-existence and the language of appointment. In particular, I have addressed the questions: (a) *Was the Son always Son or did he become Son?* (b) *If he was always Son, how could he be appointed Son?*

A secondary objective, but one which has a bearing on the central issue, is the Jewishness of the author of Epistle to the Hebrews and his addressees. I have endeavoured to show that though the author had an excellent Greek education he also had a very Jewish grounding and upbringing. Though the author may have used Hellenistic packaging to communicate his ideas, the thought and content was Hebraic. This feature is apparent in the author's midrashic method of exegesis of the Scriptures, in his terminology, phraseology, ideas, and concepts.

The Messianic Son [ch. 1]

Permeating the Epistle is a powerful underlying theme of continuity between the old and the new, between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, between the revelation of God made known by the prophets of old and the final and decisive revelation of God in His Messianic Son in these last days. For this author, Christianity is Judaism; there is for him no other salvation history than that which culminates in the person and work of the messianic Son

of God. This decisive temporal occurrence represents the highest form of God's self-revelation, to which all other divine revelations must be related. To Hebrews, there could be no revelation of God essentially different from that made in and through the messianic Son of God.

I have also attempted to show that the author had in mind a unique relationship between God and Messiah when he applied to the latter the title 'Son'. Moreover, I have demonstrated that the concept of the Messiah as the Son of God was in existence in, at least one form of pre-Christian Palestinian Judaism.

The Appointed and Exalted Son [ch. 2]

Of the various solutions offered to explain the christological problem of Hebrews, I have found that the orthodox solution comes closest to the christology of Hebrews. It accepts that full account must be taken of both traditions of eternal pre-existence and appointment and that both are central and crucial to Hebrews' christology. In this chapter I have reviewed critically the adoptionist and kenotic solutions and I found them to be inadequate in resolving the issue since they fail to take full account of all the factors of the christology of Hebrews.

The Son Appointed High Priest [ch. 3]

Despite the inescapable tension between the language of the Son's 'pre-existence' and the language of his 'appointment' in the Epistle to the Hebrews far from contradicting each other, as the contradictionist solution advocates,

there is an indispensable, interdependent and integral relationship between them. Hebrews' christology of the Messiah and his High Priesthood is inseparably combined with that of the pre-existent Son throughout the Epistle (cf. 1:3; 2:16f.; 3:1-6; 4:14; 6:6; 10:29). An important feature of Hebrews is how the author intermingles references to the pre-existent Son with those of the exalted and appointed Son and passes so easily from one to the other (cf. Heb. 1:3; 2:5-9; 3:1-6; 4:14; 5:8; 7:28). It could be maintained that the author made no mental distinction between the eternal pre-existent Son and the appointed Son and that his immediate and direct design was not to address absolutely either the divine or the human nature of the Messiah, but only his person.

There is such a real unity and a oneness between the pre-existent Son and the appointed and exalted Son in Hebrews that neither exists without the other. The unique pre-existent relationship of the Son with God gives his sacrifice and High Priesthood its inestimable efficacy and value (cf. Heb. 6:4-6; 9:14-15; 10:29). But, on the other hand, if there never was or never was to be an exaltation and appointment of the Son, there would never have been the generation of the pre-existent Son. His generation is by virtue of, and dependent on, the eternal effectiveness, forwards and backwards, of his exaltation and appointment as High Priest. So, while what he was was indispensable for what he would become, what he would become is indispensable to understand what he was. Not only can the pre-existent Son be spoken of as the Messiah in anticipation of this central event of his appointment as High Priest, but he is, always was, and always will be the true

and real Messiah and High Priest, being pre-existently generated by virtue of the eternal effectiveness, retrospective and prospective of that central and decisive event. The Messiah, though essentially divinely appointed as such, was not only Messiah in his exalted heavenly state as has been held by the Socinians, but he was always such. Therefore, it is possible to talk of his 'becoming' and yet of his never changing, since what he became was what he always was (cf. Heb. 13:8).

An analogy, or possibly more accurately a type, of this idea of appointing someone to an office which he already holds can be found in the ancient pre-exilic Israelite New Year Festival, better known as Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles) or the great Autumnal Festival of the Ingathering of fruit. At this Autumnal New Year Festival, Yahweh and the Israelite king were re-enthroned annually with dramatic and imaginative ritual. On New Year's day, there was from a very early date an annual ceremony in which Yahweh, the eternal King (cf. Pss. 29:10; 93:2), came in procession to His shrine, the Temple, and was enthroned anew (cf. Pss. 47, 93, 95-99, 24, 68, 132). In pre-exilic times, the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the Presence of Yahweh, was carried in procession up to the Temple Mount with great ceremony. There Yahweh was established in His place, and having yet again assumed His royal status, He proceeded to decide the course of the coming year. In the enthronement declaration '*Yahweh* has become King', His sovereignty, His creative power, His defeat of the chaos forces, and His salvatory works on behalf of His people were experienced anew annually by the Israelites, not

simply 'in memory of' but as a present and positive reality. Israel seemingly saw no contradiction in Yahweh being appointed annually (and eschatologically) to a role which was always His. Rather they are bound together. Nor did they see a conflict between Yahweh's viceroy's (the earthly king's) original coronation and the annual re-enthronements of what was already his. The enthronement of the king was not just a once-for-all installation but it was renewed annually, like Yahweh's eternal kingship, at the New Year Festival.

The Eternal Son [ch. 4]

In this chapter, I have argued, in contrast to Arius, that in Hebrews the Son was not just pre-existently generated but eternally so and that the Son shared the same eternal essence as the Father. The divine glory, power, status and essence of the Son are such that they could not be obtained through creation even before time begun or through adoption or by an act of kenosis without doing damage to the Godhead and effecting the demise of the universe. I have shown that the Son, for the author of Hebrews, is no less than 'Light of Light' and 'true God of true God'.

The Son called God [ch. 5]

In calling the Son ὁ θεός in Heb. 1:8, the author is only making explicit what elsewhere in the opening chapter of the Epistle, particularly v.3, is implicit, namely that the messianic Son is God, pre-existent and eternal; that there was never when he was not.

The Son of Man [ch. 6]

I have argued that the title 'Son of Man' (Ps. 8) was a messianic title in Judaism, at least, in the first half of the first century AD and that the author of Hebrews applies the title in Heb. 2:6 to the Son messianically with reference to his Incarnation.

The Incarnate Son [ch. 7]

Despite the plausibility of the translation of 'to help' or 'to assist' for the verb ἐπιλαμβάνεται in Heb. 2:16, and the considerable support that it has among modern scholars, I have argued that it is far too weak to do justice to the verb, to the thrust of the verse and to its context. The sense 'to appropriate' or 'to assume' offers the best translation of the verse, taking account of both the verb and its context in Hebrews. By taking to himself the seed of Abraham, the Son became part of the human race, taking human nature to be his own and became truly man. Significantly, Heb. 2:16 affirms the pre-existence of the Messiah in another nature other than what he assumed. He *was* before he was incarnated; he subsisted before or else he could not have taken on him what he had not.

Jewish Monotheism and Christology (apdx.)

The Jewishness of the Epistle has made the central issue more difficult for modern scholarship; that a Jewish piece of literature should both implicitly and explicitly regard a second person as God appears to conflict with Jewish monotheism. However, our author did not claim that the Son was another God

or that there was more than one God. On the other hand, he (and apparently his addressees also) did not see his binitarian view of the Godhead, of which the Son is an integral part, as contradicting his (or their) Jewish monotheistic faith. I have attempted to show that in the first century, the foundations for such a view of the Godhead were already laid in the various Judaisms.

General Closing Remarks

It has been claimed, that 'the habit of calling Jesus God tends to restrict unduly our understanding of the riches of the Divine Being' and as a result 'may easily lead to a Sabellian interpretation of the Person of Christ' (cf. Taylor, 1961-62, 118). Moreover, the concept that Jesus is God is believed to compromise 'the wonder of the Incarnation' and 'if we call Jesus God, we may find it difficult to refer to Him as a man, that is, if by this term we mean a separate individual' (ibid.). While I doubt very much that calling Jesus God 'tends to restrict unduly our understanding of the riches of the Divine Being', it is quite likely that an exclusive emphasis on the Messiah's divinity could lead to 'a semidocetic understanding of Jesus' (Brown, 1965, 547). However, the answer to this problem 'lies more in the direction of emphasizing the humanity of Jesus, rather than in questioning the validity of the formula "Jesus is God"' (Ibid.). The author of Hebrews can hardly be accused of neglecting the Son's Incarnation and humanity which he describes in some of the most graphic terms in the NT. A more vivid portrait of the Messiah's humanity cannot be found elsewhere in the NT. Hebrews places the divinity and humanity in juxtaposition and holds both in tension.

It has been advocated by Flusser that 'Christianity's belief in the divine nature of Christ is not as important for the living Christian faith as is the violent death and resurrection of Jesus Christ' (Flusser, 1987, 62f.). The author of Hebrews, for whom both the divine and the human natures of the Son were of equal importance, would not agree. For him, the divine nature of the Son underpins his whole person and work and the Christology of Hebrews cannot be fully understood without taking account of this phenomenon.

Though modern scholars have found the apparent dichotomy in the relationship between the language of pre-existence and the language of appointment a problem, it was not one to this author nor do I suspect to his addressees. Whatever function is under consideration, the identity and the eternal generation of the pre-existent Son or his Second Coming, they can only be fully understood when it is recognised that the real centre of all revelation is the Incarnate and exalted Son as Priest and King. Without this relationship, there would be little or nothing to prevent christology degenerating into docetism and syncretism and Jesus becoming a philosophical-religious principle, and his historical life a mythological cloak (cf. Cullmann, 1959, 321ff.).

The Epistle to the Hebrews, through its presentation of one of the highest (if not the highest) and one of the lowest (if not the lowest) christologies in the NT, has made a distinctive contribution to NT christology. Outside the Johannine corpus, only Hebrews unequivocally applies the title $\acute{\omicron}\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ to the Messiah. Yet Hebrews achieves something which the Fourth Gospel never quite attains, the clear statement of the humanity of the Messiah

which balances the equally clear emphasis on his divinity (cf. Mealand, 1980, 181; Robinson, 1973, 155). As Williamson says, 'the author of Hebrews must be ranked at least alongside St Paul and St John, and perhaps even above them, as one of the greatest theologians of the NT period of Christianity' (Williamson, 1983, 5).

Paul Johnson has written that 'Job was a text for antiquity and it is a text for modernity, a text especially for that chosen and battered people, the Jews' (Johnson, 1987, 94); for me, the Epistle to the Hebrews is also such a text. For the author, the messianic Son of God, who inaugurated the Second Covenant, was the 'consummation of the Jewish system' (Moule, 1958, 229). *To the Son*, the world to come has been put in subjection; *in him*, God's people have a great eternal unchanging High Priest and a once-and-for-all effective Yom Kippur sacrifice; and *through him*, they have free and bold access into the Holy of Holies, to the Mercy Seat and to God's very throne of grace.

APPENDIX

JEWISH MONOTHEISM AND CHRISTOLOGY

Jewish monotheism has recently, at least, become an issue of controversy. One school of thought postulates 'that most varieties of Judaism are marked by a dualistic pattern in which two divine entities are presupposed' (Hayman, 1991, 2). This school believes 'that it is hardly ever appropriate to use the term monotheism to describe the Jewish idea of God' (ibid.), and though the Jewish view of God before the Middle Ages may have been monotheistic in theory, functionally it was not (cf. ibid. 2, 14). Another school of thought postulates that the Jewish monotheism of NT times was so restrictive that it inhibited the development of the deity of the Messiah in the early Church until its membership became predominantly Gentile (cf. Casey, 1991, 9, 97ff. 85, 146). For the sake of ease, I have called the two schools of thought 'The Two Deity Hypothesis' and 'The Gentile Influence ^{Hypothesis} ~~Hypothesis~~' respectively. In contrast, the hypothesis of this thesis is that Judaism at the turn of the era was genuinely monotheistic but it was a monotheism that was able to accommodate a binitarian view, at least, of the one true God.

The Two Deity Hypothesis

A good representative of this school of thought is Peter Hayman who concludes:

If, then, monotheism seems an inappropriate term with which to describe all the rich variety of Jewish beliefs about God, at least before the Middle Ages, what alternative description should be offered? It seems to me that

something like 'a cooperative dualism' would be a more appropriate description than monotheism...From the Book of Daniel on, nearly every variety of Judaism maintained the pattern of the Supreme God plus his vice-regent/vizier, or some similar agency who relates Israel to God. The names change but the roles remain the same. Sometimes the angel is Yehoel as on the magic bowl. Note this name! Yahweh is El. Sometimes it is Metatron. In 11Q Melch it is Melchizedek. In Philo it is the Logos. For the mystics and the midrashim it is the Prince of the Presence or the *Sar Torah*, for the Kabbalah the Shekinah or the Sefirot, for the medieval philosophers the Active Intellect....

Hardly any variety of Judaism seems to have been able to manage with just one divine entity.

(Hayman, 1991, 11)

The tension between God's Attribute of Mercy and his Attribute of Justice, which the rabbis personify (cf. Gen. R. 8:5; Ex. R. 6:1; Lev. R. 29:4, 9; Num. R. 16:22; etc.) presumably as their answer to the 'two powers in Heaven' heresy (cf. Hayman, 1991, 12), is for Hayman 'in reality a conflict between two gods' (ibid. 13). He believes that 'the ancient Canaanite background to Israelite religion has imposed a lasting dualistic pattern upon Judaism' (ibid. 14). One of Hayman's objectives was to find an explanation why so many Jews in the first century saw Christianity as the fulfilment of Judaism and easily accepted the divinity of Jesus (ibid. 15). For him this phenomenon is explained by 'The fact that functionally Jews believed in the existence of two gods' (ibid. 14).

However, I think that it is a mistake to see the Judaisms at the turn of the era as accommodating more than one deity. Moreover, most (and probably all) of Hayman's examples given in support of his hypothesis are capable of a different interpretation as I shall suggest further on. In addition, concerning the personifications of God's attributes, Hayman himself has said in a previous

article that 'this personification of the Attribute of Justice is not meant to be taken literally' (ibid. 1976, 468). Whatever traces of the influence of the ancient Canaanite religion, which might be found in the OT and in the Judaisms, it is highly doubtful that the Israelites or Jews gave the same interpretation to any of the assumed traditions as a result of the influence of the Sinai revelation and Yahwistic religion. The term 'monotheism' literally means 'oneness of the godhead' and is the decisive characteristic of the Israelite conception of God, though different stages of development and definition are discernible. Probably the Hebrews alone of all the Semitic peoples reached the stage of a true monotheism through the teachings of their prophets, though it required centuries of development before every trace of idolatry was erased from among them.

Although it is claimed that first century Judaism was more an orthopraxy than an orthodoxy and lacked a creed (cf. Rainbow, 81), there is considerable evidence from a number of sources that the belief in one God was a chief and a deeply held tenet and certainly more than just a theory. Philo says, 'Let us, then, engrave deep in our hearts this as the first and most sacred of commandments, to acknowledge and honour one God Who is above all' (Philo, Decal. 65; cf. Spec. Leg. 1:12; Mos. 1:75; Qu in Gen. 4:8). Around the turn of the first century AD, at least, and probably long before, the Temple sacrifices at Jerusalem were offered exclusively to Yahweh (cf. Hurtado, 1993, 360f.). Josephus writes, 'We have but one temple for the one God' (Εἷς ναὸς ἑνὸς θεοῦ) (Jos. Contra Ap. 2:193; cf. Ant. 2:275). The opposition of the Jews to the

decree in 167 BC of Antiochus Epiphanes (cf. 1 Macc. 1:41-64) and to the claims of divine status by Caligula and his order that his statue be erected in the Jerusalem Temple show how strongly and deeply Jews felt about their monotheistic faith (cf. Nickelsburg, 1981, 201f). Even the mounting of an eagle¹ over the Temple gate by Herod the Great provoked the Jewish people to a riot, for which the ringleaders paid with their lives (cf. Schürer, 1:313, 325; Jos. Ant. 17:149-154). While the monastic community of Qumran were in dissent with the Temple administration at Jerusalem, disapproving of its priesthood (cf. 1QS 8:13-15) and of 'the Wicked Priest' the adversary of the Teacher of Righteousness (cf. 1QpHab 8:8-11; 9:4-9; 11:4) and of such things as the lunar calendar-observance so that the sacrifices were offered on the wrong days (cf. CD 6:11, 17-20; Fitzmyer, 1992, 85-88), it was not, as the Temple Scroll makes clear, against the concept of the Temple, its sacrifices to one God and monotheism (cf. 11QTemple 29:2-10; 63:3). Indeed, the community was probably originally formed by a nucleus of Jewish priests, often referred to as the sons of Zadok (1QS 5:2, 9; 1QSa 1:2, 24; 2:3; 1QSB3:22; Cd 3:21; 4:3) who withdrew to the desert to prepare the way of the Lord by 'the study of the Law' (cf. 1QS 8:13-15). At Qumran, the prayers were made to the one God (cf. 11QPs^a; 4Q503-4, 4Q507-9; etc.) as were the singing of the Thanksgiving Hymns (cf. 1QH). Though the Qumran community developed a

¹ There is some evidence that the coin, which was struck a short time before Herod the Great's death in 4 BC, bore an eagle on its reverse side, and on the obverse side the king's name and title appeared on either side of a cornucopiae (cf. Kadman & fellow editors, 32; Schürer, 1:312, also n.85).

very distinctive ethical dualism, because of its belief in God's predestination of all things, it was 'consonant with its monotheistic belief' (Fitzmyer, 1992, 67, 122; cf. 1QS 3:15-4:26). Moreover, despite Qumran's ^{angelology} ~~angelogy~~, Hurtado claims 'the angels are not objects of worship' (Hurtado, 1993, 361).

Moreover, the belief in one God as a mark of Jews was recognised by pagans. Petronius, the Roman legate of Syria, knew in advance that Caligula's action would be violently opposed by the Jews (cf. Nickelsburg, 1981, 201f).

Tacitus writes:

The Egyptians worship a variety of animals and half-human, half-bestial forms, whereas the Jewish religion is a purely spiritual monotheism. They hold it to be impious to make idols of perishable materials in the likeness of man: for them, the Most High and Eternal cannot be portrayed by human hands and will never pass away.

The Histories
(Tacitus, ⁵5:5)

This monotheism was also a keynote in the Jewish mission to the Gentiles and attested by its importance in Jewish propaganda literature (cf. Schürer, 3.1:150-54; Sib. Or. 3:11-12; 4:27-32; 5:172-76, 284f., 493-500; Letter of Aristeas, 132-145; Fragments of Pseudo-Greek Poets, i.e. Hesiod, Pythagoras, Aeschylus, Sophocles [see Charlesworth, 1983, 2:824ff.]; Rainbow, 81f.).

Rainbow observes:

Although pagans applied εἶς- or μόνος- formulae to multiple gods and goddesses in a merely elative sense, Jews never applied this type of formula to their intermediaries, but reserved them very stringently for God alone.

(Rainbow, 83)

Any understanding of Jewish monotheism must take full account of the actual people's description in monotheistic language of their beliefs and

traditions and, not least, the Tanak.

Thus says the Lord, the King of
Israel,
and his redeemer, the Lord of
hosts,
'I am the first and the last,
and apart from me there is no
God.'

[Isa. 44:6]

כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ-יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְגָאֲלוֹ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן וְאֲנִי אַחֲרֹן
וּמִבְּלִעְדִּי אֵין אֱלֹהִים:

I am the Lord, and there is no
other,
besides me there is no God...
I fashion the light and create
darkness:
I make peace and create evil:
I the Lord make all these things.

[ibid. 45:5-7]

אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין עוֹד
וְלֹאֲתִי אֵין אֱלֹהִים...
יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ
עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא רָע
אֲנִי יְהוָה עוֹשֶׂה כָּל-אֵלֶּה:

Shall there be evil in the city,
and the Lord not have done it?

[Amos 3:6]

אִם-תִּהְיֶה רָעָה בְּעִיר
וַיְהוֶה לֹא עָשָׂה:

This biblical monotheism for the Jews, as we have already noted in chapter two, is related to creation, differing from polytheistic paganism not only in the number of gods professed, but in its understanding of God as absolutely above nature and in complete mastery of it. The universe and its individual parts: stars, sun, moon, earth and sea exist solely by God's will; they tremble before Him and perform His bidding (cf. Mek. to Ex. 16:4; 18:12 [Lauterback, 2:102f., 178]; M. Sanh. 4:5; B. AZ 3b; Dt. R. 2:31). Moreover this monotheism is related to Jewish morality and piety, since the Lord who is 'glorious in holiness' (Ex. 15:11) requires that men worship Him 'in the beauty of holiness' (cf. 1 Chr. 16:29; Pss. 29:2; 96:9). Idolatry was identified with

immoral living by the rabbis who were doubtless under the impression that it was Roman and Greek polytheism that caused immorality. (cf. Sifre Num. 111:1; M. Sanh. 4:5; AZ. 4:7; B. Hor. 8a; Sanh. 74a; Sot. 4b). For the Greeks man was not a sinful being in need of redemption, and piety was not a matter of perpetual moral endeavour. Not unlike Judaism, Greek religion supported the general ethos of Greek culture, emphasizing the sense of belonging to a community and the need for due observance of social forms. But Greek religion was never personal in the sense of a means for the individual to express his unique identity. Individualism, a preoccupation with inner states and the belief that intentions matter more than actions were discouraged. Religion, for Greeks, was principally a matter of observing their cult. It was not a matter of innerness or intense private communion with the god(s) concerned, rather piety was literally a matter of respect for the gods, not love, and even the warmest relationship would have cooled fairly rapidly without the observance of the cult (cf. Boardman, 261). Besides, these gods of the Greeks seemed to excel in strength and skill more than in the quieter virtues. Indeed, their behaviour in mythology was often scandalous:

**There might you see the gods in sundry shapes
Committing heady riots, incest, rapes.**

(ibid.)

The difference between monotheism and polytheism or 'a cooperative dualism' is not just a numerical and quantitative question but also one of morality and quality that goes right to the heart of religion. Pinchas Lapide in

his debate with Jürgen Moltmann puts this point pertinently and succinctly when he said:

Two or more [gods] cannot be absolute. Two or more also cannot be timeless and eternal. If there are two or more, there can be no concept of omnipotence. Two or more must lead to division of labor and to conflict; likewise, where the reception of "only two" is present, as by Zoroaster, the Lordship will be divided between good and evil, with devastating effects in popular belief. For what the one bids, the other can forbid; what Zeus commands, Hera can sabotage - thus monotheism also becomes an indispensable presupposition of a mono-ethics.

(Lapide & Moltmann, 30)

The supreme and core affirmation of the unity of the Godhead in Judaism is found in the *Shema* ('hear'), the first word of the verse in Dt. 6:4. In the liturgy, the *Shema* consists of three passages: Dt. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; & Num. 15:37-41. but originally the *Shema* (cf. B. Suk. 42a; Ber. 13b; JE 11:266) consisted of the one verse:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One. (Dt. 6:4) שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

Special significance was attached to this first verse. The reciting of the *Shema* is called the acceptance of 'the yoke of the kingdom of heaven' (M. Ber. 2:2, 5). It was to be recited morning and evening by Jews and is related to their assurance of living in the world to come (cf. P. Shab. 1:3.8). 'The Lord is one: - for everyone in this world....The Lord is one: - in the world to come' (Sifre Dt. 31:4.1). Its importance to the Jewish faith is reflected by the fact that the very first words of the foundation document of rabbinic Judaism, the Mishnah, discusses this obligation to read the *Shema* morning and evening which rests upon the interpretation of וּבְשִׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ (Dt. 6:7), 'and when you

lie down and when you rise up' (cf. M. Ber. 1:1-2). The command to read the *Shema* twice daily is regarded as a divine commandment (cf. Sifre to Dt. 31:2.1). According to the Talmud, the reading of the *Shema* morning and evening fulfils the commandment, 'Thou shalt meditate therein day and night' (Josh. 1:8; cf. B. Men. 99b). The reciting of the *Shema* morning and evening preserves Israel from the enemy (cf. B. Sot. 42a). R. Mani claims that 'He who recites the *Shema*' in its proper time is greater than he who studies the Torah' (B. Ber. 10b). As soon as a child 'is able to speak, his father must teach him Torah and the reading of the *Shema*' (B. Suk. 42a). It was on the lips of those who suffered and were tortured for the sake of the Law. The description of the death of R. Akiba (c. 50-135 AD) who ended his life as a martyr in a Roman torture chamber serves to illustrate the importance of this Oneness of God and how it became the touchstone of Jewish martyrs. R. Akiba patiently endured while his flesh was being torn with iron combs, and died reciting the *Shema*; he prolonged the last word of the sentence '*Ehad*' (one) until he expired (cf. B. Ber. 61b). No doubt there has been a development in the use of the *Shema*, but its early importance is evidenced by the debate on it between the schools of Shammai and Hillel of Dt. 6:7 (cf. M. Ber. 1:1-3). The Nash papyrus, dating from the Hasmonean period, contains the Ten Commandments, and the first portion of the *Shema* (cf. EJ 14:1370). The Mishnah records that in the Temple all three portions of the *Shema* were recited together with the Commandments, and explicit reference is made to the benediction after the *Shema* (cf. M. Taan. 5:1; also 4:3).

The belief in the unity of the Godhead was formulated by Maimonides as the second¹ of the thirteen articles of faith known as the Maimonidean Creed (cf. JE 8:661). The profession of the divine unity is the climax of the devotion on the greatest of the holy days, namely, Yom Kippur (ibid.). Thus the concept of God's oneness is fundamental to Judaism. It is probably Judaism's greatest contribution to the religious thought of mankind and still constitutes the burden of its Messianic ideal (cf. Zech. 14:9). The evidence on the ground undermines Hayman's hypothesis that 'functionally Jews believed in the existence of two gods' (cf. Hayman, 1991, 14). Any solution to the exalted figures in Jewish literature must also take full account of the Jewish belief in one true God. I think Hurtado's criticism is particularly relevant to the school of thought represented by Hayman when he writes:

...there has been a tendency to proceed deductively from *a priori* presumptions of what monotheism must mean, instead of building up a view inductively from the evidence of how monotheism actually operated in the thought and practice of ancient Jews....

there is a tendency to proceed as if we can know in advance what "monotheism" must mean, which turns out to be a very modern, monistic form of monotheism, and can accordingly evaluate ancient Jewish texts and beliefs as to whether or how closely they meet an *a priori* standard of "pure" monotheism.

(Hurtado, 1993, 354)

The Gentile Influence Hypothesis

Maurice Casey, who is concerned with NT christology and its relation to

¹ The belief in God as the author of creation ranks first among the thirteen fundamentals enumerated by Maimonides (cf. JE 4:336).

Jewish monotheism, is a good up-to-date representative of this school of thought. A crucial question arises here as to how does this concept of the divine status of the Son fit in with the Jewish concept of monotheism. Casey would claim that it just does not fit in. In order to evaluate the extent to which a given group might be identified as Jewish in the Second Temple period, Casey employs a scale based on 'eight identity factors of Second Temple Judaism: ethnicity, scripture, monotheism, circumcision, sabbath observance, dietary laws, purity laws and major festivals' (Casey, 1991, 12). However, when Casey sketches the development of NT christology, he also introduces two methodological headings, 'static parallels' and 'dynamic parallels' 'to isolate those factors which are important for explaining the growth of christology' (ibid. 78). By 'static parallels' he means 'discrete items of known Jewish belief about intermediary figures which are found also as beliefs about Jesus' (ibid.). For example, texts referring to such titles as 'Lord', 'Messiah', 'Logos', 'Word of God', 'Son of Man', 'Son of God' etc. which have a significant Jewish background would be 'static parallels'. The importance of these static parallels is that they show that Second Temple Judaism already contained at least some, if not all, of the beliefs taken up into NT christology. However, Casey observes that 'many aspects of Christ's finished work have no parallel' (ibid. 81). This Casey finds unsatisfactory and so he introduces his 'dynamic parallels', by which he means 'that an intermediary figure was involved in a process which increased its status, or function, or both' (ibid. 78). Casey sets out to show a functionalist correlation between the reinterpretation and the process of

development of these intermediary figures and the needs of the community (cf. *ibid.* 82-85). He says:

The developments thus exemplify a common process. Whether these figures are human, supernatural or abstract, additional status and new functions might be attributed to them if some members of the community needed to visualise them like that. Consequently, the developments are most vigorous in cases where the needs of either the community or of a subgroup within it were especially great.

(*ibid.* 85)

This observation provides a crucial link in Casey's argument regarding the emergence of incarnational christology which he sees as invoking three stages or three types of Christian community:

In the first stage, the Christian community was Jewish, a subgroup within Judaism, as the Jesus movement had been. In the second stage, Gentiles entered the Christian community in significant numbers, without becoming Jewish. In the third stage, Christianity is identifiable as a Gentile religion.

(*ibid.* 97)

Despite the eight identity factors, monotheism becomes for Casey the controlling factor for an acceptable Jewish christology; his appeal to monotheism permeates his book. He claims the development of NT christology 'was limited by the nature of Jewish monotheism' (*ibid.* 9, cf. also 85, 138) and that it was only in the third stage when Gentiles were dominant in the church that the chains and restraints of monotheism could be shed and the divinity of Jesus be asserted (cf. *ibid.* 98, 146).

Casey hypothesizes that the decline in *halakhah* observance forced Jesus into the centre of the community's identity structure and generated 'christological developments which observant Jews might find unconvincing' (*ibid.* 138). Moreover, he claims that 'the conflicts intensified by war between

Israel and Rome drove christological development up to the deity of Jesus, and expelled the Johannine community from the synagogue' (ibid.). These rather casual assertions appear speculative but Casey's monotheistic argument is one that we must address.

Casey claims, 'the deity of Jesus is one belief that Jews cannot hold while remaining in the Jewish community, for they perceive it as a breach of the monotheistic faith revealed to them by God in the course of their own history' (Casey, 1991, 165). It is true that the spread of Christianity with its doctrine of the divinity of the Messiah called forth a number of expressions from the Jewish sages regarding the subject of God's unity, and the 'two powers in heaven' heresy (cf. Sifre Dt. 329:1.1; Gen. R. 8:9; Ex. R. 20:10; 29:5; Dt. R. 2:33; SS. R. 7:9.1; Mid. Ps. 149:1; P. Taan. 2:1.12; Segal, 147ff.). However, these references appear to contain more polemic than substance when we consider, as I shall suggest, that the roots of the so-called 'two powers in heaven' heresy lie in Judaism itself.

There are significant weaknesses in Casey's hypothesis which materially undermine it. First, the NT upholds Jewish monotheism; Jesus, himself is represented as answering the question about which was the greatest commandment with the *Shema* (cf. Mk. 12:29), and there is no lack of Pauline writings which bear witness to the fact that even the Apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 11:13) held true to his Jewish monotheism (cf. 1: Cor. 8:6; 12:6; Eph. 4:6). Moreover, the Epistle to the Hebrews stands firmly in this Jewish tradition of the unity of the Godhead. The Son is not another god or a different or separate

divine ὑπόστασις; he is of the same essence as the Father. Also, there is ample evidence in the NT as Hayman has rightly recognised (cf. Hayman, 1991, 15), that long before the Church became predominantly Gentile, Jesus was viewed as divine and many Christian Jews accepted the deity of Jesus as compatible with their monotheistic faith in one God. The Jewish Epistle to the Hebrews addressed to Hebrew Christians is a prime example.

It is interesting that despite the terms in which Paul portrays the Messiah (cf. Rom. 1:7; 9:5; 1 Cor. 1:1-3, 24; 2:8; 8:6; 10:4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 2:6; 3:21; Col. 1:15-17), terms that denote pre-existence and divinity, there appears to be no criticism of his teaching, not even from the so-called Christian Judaisers who are much more concerned with national identity markers such as circumcision, food laws and sabbath observances which Dunn calls 'boundary-marking rituals' (Dunn, 1988, lxxii; cf. Acts 15). Schiffman sought to understand why Christianity was not simply regarded as one of the Jewish sects, and why 'Judaism sought to dissociate itself fully from Christianity' (Schiffman, 115) which he reckoned ultimately took place after the Bar Kokhba war (AD 132-35; cf. *ibid.* 156). He was puzzled why Judaism, after tolerating sectarianism and schism for practically the entire length of the Second Temple era, should elect to regard Christianity as an entirely different religion. Significantly, Schiffman does not ascribe this divorce to the divine status of the Messiah; or to Christianity breaching Jewish monotheism, but claims, 'The ultimate parting of the ways for Judaism and Christianity took place when adherents of Christianity no longer conformed to the halakic

definitions of a Jew' (ibid. 156; cf. Acts 15).

Secondly, O'Neill correctly points out in his review that the title of Casey's book (*From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*) is misleading and writes:

When Christians said Jesus was God they were not saying he was a god in a Gentile sense; they always maintained that he was the second person of the Trinity, of a tri-unity. This shows that they were very much under the influence of Judaism; in fact, still bound by its key confession that the Lord our God is one Lord.

(O'Neill, 1992, 197)

Thirdly, Casey seems to share something of the same weakness as Hayman's hypothesis, namely, that he appears to impose on early Judaism a modern monistic definition of monotheism (cf. Hurtado, 1993, 354). In downplaying the significance and the attributes given to other transcendent beings in Jewish literature, Casey has inadequately presented the ancient Jewish monotheism that was able to accommodate a binitarian view of the one true sovereign God. There are indications of this view of the Godhead in both the OT and the various Judaisms. In Philo, the Wisdom literature, the Qumran Scrolls, and in rabbinic literature itself, we have the rudiments of a binitarian (and possibly even a trinitarian) view of God.

The OT

Isa. 9:6 [MT 5] speaks of 'a Son given to us' who shall be called **פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ** ['Wonderful Counsellor'], **אֵל גִּבּוֹר** ['mighty God'], **אָבִי עֶד** ['Father Eternal'], **שָׁלֹם** ['Prince of Peace']. Daniel can speak of a 'Son of man' coming with the clouds of heaven and whose 'dominion is an everlasting dominion' (Dan.

7:13f.). As Goldingay points out, nowhere else in the OT does any celestial figure appear with clouds except God and asserts that 'in isolation from the context, v 13a would most naturally denote God himself' (Goldingay, 171, cf. Ps. 104:3; Isa. 19:1; Collins, 1992, 465).

Wisdom Literature

At times Wisdom, in Proverbs, could be interpreted as a distinct being who rejoices before God (cf. Prov. 8:30), who can be found (ibid. 8:35), and who can be sinned against (cf. ibid. 8:36). In the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom is portrayed as sitting by God's throne (cf. Wis. 9:4), as having given to the first man 'power to rule all things' (Wis. 10:2), as being 'privy to the mysteries of the knowledge of God, and a lover of his works' (Wis. 8:4), and is practically identified with the word of God (cf. Wis. 9:1-2). Significantly, the word of God is portrayed as a separate being in the same work:

For while all things were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course, thine Almighty word leaped from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction, and brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and standing up filled all things with death; and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth.

(Wis. 18:14-16)

Qumran Literature

In chapter one, we considered the Qumran text, 4Q246, in an attempt to show that there was a pre-Christian application of the title 'Son of God' to the Messiah in Palestinian Judaism. However, the title also implies a divine status, especially when the person holding it is also the 'judge of the earth' and whose

'rule will be an Eternal rule'. Moreover, the Qumran fragment, 11QMelch, refers to Melchizedek as 'your Elohim' (cf. lines 1, 16, 23; Horton, 67ff.; Vermes, 1962, 1975, 1987, 301). Flusser claims that 'this, however, implies no admission of his divine nature (cf. Flusser, 1988, 188), but when the same Qumran fragment also portrays Melchizedek as a heavenly judge executing the final judgment, then a divine status seems implied (cf. Hayman, 1991, 11). This hypothesis is strengthened by the application of אֱלֹהִים of Ps. 82:1 to Melchizedek in 11QMelch (line 10) and which in the psalm refers to Yahweh. A distinction appears to be made between the first אֱלֹהִים which is followed by the singular verb נָצַב ('to stand') and refers to Melchizedek (in the psalm it refers to Yahweh) and the second אֱלֹהִים which should be taken as a plural referring to the angelic beings in the court of Yahweh (cf. Horton, 71). Ackerman in his study of Ps. 82 concludes that נָצַב is used to refer to the stance taken by a sovereign to receive acknowledgment of his lordship in his court.¹ Moreover, as Hayman correctly observes, 'the Melchizedek text at Qumran is early enough to justify us in believing that the ground for Christology had already been well laid in pre-Christian Judaism' (Hayman, 1991, 15).

Philo's Logos

Philo is an important early witness to a binitarian view of the Godhead

¹ J. S. Ackerman: *An Exegetical Study of Psalm 82*, Ph.D Dissertation, Harvard University, 1966 (cf. Tate, 335).

through the divine status that he sometimes ascribes to the Logos. Klausner claims:

In the last analysis, for Philo, the complete and absolute monotheist, the Logos is nothing more than the messenger and minister of God, like the ministering angels, whom Philo also sometimes calls Logoi.

(Klausner, 1944, 187)

It is true that angels are called by Philo Logoi (cf. Som. 1:141f. 147; Post. 91) and that the Logos is referred to as an angel (cf. Leg. All. 3:177; Conf. 146). However, Philo uses the term Logos in many senses: (1) as the deed of God (cf. Sac. 65; Mos. 1:283; Decal. 47), (2) as a real incorporeal being created by God before the creation of the world (cf. Som. 1:62; Plant. 18f.; Decal. 134; Leg. All. 2:86; 3:73, 175; Mig. 6; Agr. 51; Conf. 41, 62; 146f.; Qu. in Gen. 2:62), (3) as immanent in the world (cf. Plant. 9; Wolfson, 325ff.), (4) as the archetypal idea (cf. Qu. in Gen. 1:4) or the totality of ideas, the idea of ideas (ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν) (cf. Op. 25;), (5) as a pattern of the human mind (cf. Quis Her. 230-35; also Op. 23, 69; Spec. Leg. 3:207), (6) as the idea of virtue (cf. Som 2:242-43). In particular, Philo very pertinently speaks of the logos as 'the Word who is antecedent to all that has come into existence' (Mig. 6), as 'His true Word and Firstborn Son' (cf. Agr. 51; cf. Conf. 146), as 'the divine Word, which will be fitly dedicated to its Father' (Quis Her. 119), as 'High Priest His First-born, the divine Word' (Som. 1:215), as 'God's Man, who being the Word of the Eternal must needs himself be imperishable' (Conf. 41), as "the Beginning," and the Name of God, and His Word' (Conf. 146), as 'the Eternal Word', 'the stamp' of God (Plant. 18f.), as 'the eternal and blessed Archetype'

(Decal. 134), as the 'most holy Word....the eldest-born image of God' (Conf. 147, cf. 62f.), as 'next to Him is the Word of God' (Leg. All. 2:86), as 'the second God (δεύτερον θεόν), who is His Logos (ὃ ἐστὶν ἐκείνου λόγος)the divine Logos' (Qu. in Gen. 2:62; cf. Qu. in Ex. 2:68; Som. 1:62), as 'the most "generic" word' (Leg. All. 3:175), as 'the title "God" to His chief Word' (Som. 1:229f.), as 'that same Word, by which He made the universe' (Sac. 8; cf. Qu. in Ex. 2:68). Within some of these senses and appellations, not least the ideas of the Logos being 'eternal' and the 'Son of God', it would appear that the Logos is much more than an angel or a messenger or even an attribute of God. Rather he appears at times as a distinct divine being so much so that even Casey has to admit that in Philo 'the theoretical limit of Jewish monotheism may appear to be breached by an occasional sentence' (Casey, 1991, 85).

The equation of the Logos with the Son of God has support elsewhere in Judaism. Celsus, is said by Origen to have represented a Jew as saying: *that God's son would come to judge* (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 1:49), and *Now if the Logos in your view is Son of God, we too approve of that* (ibid. 2:31; cf. Philo, Agr. 51; Conf. 146). In chapter two, I referred to Bousset's 'amazing collection of fragments of Jewish liturgy' (Goodenough, 1969, 306) which both Bousset¹ and Goodenough believe is unmistakably Jewish, albeit, from a Judaism strongly Hellenised (cf. ibid. 306, 324ff.). Among these fragments there is a prayer to

¹ Cf. W. Bousset: 'Eine jüdische *Gebetssammlung* im siebenten Buch der apostolischen Konstitutionen,' in *Nachrichten von der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Philologische-Historische Klasse, 1915 (1916), pp. 435-85.

God which identifies the Logos with the Son of God: 'the only Son, God the Logos, the living Sophia, the first-born of every creature' (Fragment VII. 7-8, Goodenough, 1969, 320).

Significantly, some scholars in Philonic literature believe that there is an identification of the logos with the Messiah in Philo's discussion of the ultimate return of the scattered exiles to their home land, when he says that the returning exiles will be 'guided in their pilgrimage by a vision divine and superhuman unseen by others but manifest to them as they pass from exile to their home' (Praem. 165; cf. Wolfson, 2:414f.).

Rabbinic Judaism

The importance, which we have shown earlier, that Rabbinic Judaism attached to the *Shema*, reflects something of the importance which the rabbis attached to the unity of the one true God, Yahweh. But even in rabbinic literature, one can detect, at least, a binitarian view of God. We have already referred in earlier chapters to R. Akiba's belief in two thrones which also seems relevant to our present exercise (cf. B. Sanh. 38b; Hag. 14a), but it is in the *Shechinah/Memra* phenomena that we find what I believe is an implied binitarian view of the Godhead. In rabbinic literature we have some of the clearest statements which indicate that the שְׁכִינָה is a divine figure, and not a creation. Goldberg¹ rightly distinguishes the שְׁכִינָה from the angels, 'In contrast

¹ A. M. Goldberg, *Untersuchungen über die Vorstellung von der Shekhinah in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur*, Berlin, 1969, pp. 535f. (cf. Dunn, 1982, 319).

to the angels the Shekinah is the exact opposite of an intermediary being; it is no "power detached from God", no "personified abstraction".¹ Sometimes the term is simply an alternative for 'God', while at other times it has overtones of a distinct divine being. The שְׁכִינָה is worshipped, said to be 'in every place', to be 'the place of prayer' (cf. B. BB 25a), he is called God (cf. ARN^a 12 [Goldin]; ARN^b 160 [Saldarini]; Gen. R. 48:1) and identified as '*the Lord thy God*' who '*is a devouring fire*' [Dt. 4:24] 'and of whom it is written, *His throne was fiery flames* [Dan. 7:9], and of whom it is further written, *A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him* [ibid. 10]' (Lev. R. 25:3; cf. B. Nid. 13a). The 'my beloved' who is the *Shechinah* in SS. R. 1:2.1 is identified as 'the Holy One, blessed be He' in SS. R. 6:2.1 (cf. Gen. R. 98:2).

It seems quite clear from these texts (and many others) that the שְׁכִינָה is a divine figure. The Hebrew term שְׁכִינָה literally means 'the dwelling' and denotes the manifestation of God upon the stage of the world; the *Shechinah* is the immanent Divine Presence as opposed to the transcendent Divine Presence, God's unknowable mode of Being. Since the Pharisees and rabbis, unlike Philo, interpreted the Tanak, the Hebrew Bible (ie. the OT) so literally, there was a need to reconcile their deepest convictions about God, such as the stories of God's omnipresence (cf. Ps. 139) with the stories of His manifestation in a limited space such as the Holy of Holies (cf. Ex. 40:35; 1 Kgs. 8:11) and even to a space less than a square metre such as the Mercy Seat between the two cherubim upon the Ark of the Covenant (cf. Ex. 25:21f.). The rabbis conceived the idea of a God who, as it were, is able to expand and contract, to fill the

whole universe and more, or to concentrate Himself into a small space and yet still remain always eternally one and the same, in His final and ultimate essence. In the development of this idea, the rabbis were helped by the doctrine of the *שְׁכִינָה* particularly in relation to the Temple where God dwelt in some mysterious way while the *heaven and the heaven of heavens* could not contain Him (1 Kgs. 8:27; Jer. 23:24; Sifra Lev. 2:3.1; Ex. R. 34:1; Num. R. 12:4).

The targumists do not only use the term *Shechinah*, but also the Aramaic terms, which almost exclusively occur in the Targums, namely, the *Memra* (מִמְרָא = Logos = Word) and *Yekara* (יְקָרָא = כְּבוֹד = δόξα = glory) to refer to God's immanent Presence. The *Memra* of YHWH (the Lord) is one of the most famous and dominant Targumic expressions and referred to as the 'creative' or 'directive' word of God manifesting His power in the world; a term used especially in the Targums as a substitute for 'the Lord' whenever the predicate is not in conformity with the dignity, transcendence or spirituality of the Deity. For example, it is the '*Memra*,' instead of 'the Lord,' who is 'the consuming fire' (Trg. Onk. Dt. 9:3) and who 'is like a devouring fire' (Trg. Isa. 30:27). Where Moses says, 'I stood between the Lord and you' (Dt. 5:5), the Trg. Onk. has 'between the *Memra* of the Lord and you' and the 'sign between Me and you' becomes a 'sign between my *Memra* and you' (Trg. onk. Ex. 31:13, 17; cf. Trg. Onk. Gen. 9:12; 17:7, 10; Trg. Onk. Lev. 26:46; Trg. Ezek. 20:12).

The targumists tend to reflect a distinction in the use of the terms *Shechinah*, *Memra* and *Yekara* (cf. JE 11:258f.; Abelson, 155-57). An example is Trg. Ps-Jon. Dt. 5:21: 'And ye said, Verily the *Memra* of the Lord your God

hath shown you the "Shechinah" of His glory' (ibid. 157). However, there is a close association between them and considerable overlapping and parallelism. The Trg. Onk. Num. 23:21 says '*the Memra of the Lord their God supports them and the Shekhina of their King is among them*'. The Trg. Ps-Jon. Dt. 5:21 speaks of the '*Shechinah of His glory*' while the Pal. Trg. Num. 10:32, 35 has respectively 'the glory of the Shekinah of the lord' and 'the glory of Thy Shekinah' and the Trg. Jer. 17:12 speaks of *the One whose Shekhina is upon the Throne of Glory in the heavens on high*. The 'cloud of *the glory of the Lord* was over the sanctuary by day' (Ex. 40:38) is identified as 'the cloud of the *y^eqar š^ekhinta* of the Lord' (Frag. Targ. Ex. 40:38). The Trg. Onk. Ex. 19:17 has Moses bringing 'the people out from the camp towards the *Memra* of the Lord,' while the J. Trg. and Ps-Jon. Trg. have him bringing them towards the *Shechinah* (cf. JE 8:465; Abelson, 155). Similarly, on Dt. 31:3 one version of Trg. Onk. has inserted *Memra*, while the Ps-Jon has *Shechinah* (cf. ibid. 169). In the Talmud and Midrash the Hebrew term *Shechinah* took the place of the two Aramaic terms, *Memra* and *Yekara*, and absorbed their meaning (cf. JE 11:258f.). G. F. Moore notes that in the Mekilta פְּבוֹד (glory) is used where in the parallel the Talmud has *Shechinah* (cf. Moore, 1922, 56). While it is the *Memra* that is described as 'the consuming fire' in Trg. Onk. Dt. 9:3 and 'like a devouring fire' in Trg. Isa. 30:27, it is the *Shechinah* in the Midrash that is described as 'a devouring fire' (Lev. R. 25:3). In the Targums it is 'the voice of the *Memra*' that Adam and Eve hear 'walking in the garden' (Trg. Onk. Gen. 3:8; cf. Dt. 4:33, 36; 5:21; Trg. Isa. 6:8), while in the Midrash it is the voice of

the *Shechinah* (cf. SS. R. 5:1.1). Moreover, there is a correlation of roles and functions between the *Shechinah* and the *Memra* in creation (cf. Trg. Isa. 45:12 with B. BB 25a), in redemption (cf. J. Trg. Lev. 22:12; Trg. Jer. 1:8, 19; 15:20; 20:11; 30:11; 42:11; 46:28 with B. Meg. 29a; Ex. R. 23:5; Num. R. 7:10; also JE 8:465), and with regard to the Holy of Holies and the speaking from above the Mercy Seat (cf. Trg. Onk. Ex. 25:22; 29:42ff.; 30:36 with Sifra Lev. 2:3.1; Ex. R. 34:1; Num. R. 4:13; 12:4; 13:2, 6; B. RH 31a).

Though divine, the *Shechinah* or *Memra* appears to be other than the transcendent God. A distinction is drawn by the targumists and rabbis between the transcendent mode of God's being and the immanent mode of God's being and it certainly appears to be more than 'homiletic license' (cf. EJ 14:1350). Montefiore acknowledges (Montefiore & Loewe, 67) that the rabbis from time to time show that God and the שְׁכִינָה are distinct when they speak of God causing His שְׁכִינָה 'to descend' or 'to return' or 'to dwell' (cf. Lam. R. 24:1; Dt. R. 6:14), 'to pass by' (Trg. Onk. & Frag. Trg. Ex. 34:6, 40:38), and of God 'placing' His *Shechinah* in the midst of Israel (cf. Sifre Num. 94:3). Also 'the Omnipresent' is said to have 'held up the Presence of God and the ark, the priests and the Levites and the Israelites and the seven clouds of glory' (Sifre Num. 106:2.2). They even picture the *Shechinah* talking to God (cf. Mid. Prov. to 22:29; EJ 14:1350).

See a man skilled at his work - when the Sanhedrin sought to include Solomon among the three kings and four commoners [to whom the Mishnah denies a place in the world to come], the Shekinah stood up before the Holy, praised be He, and said to Him, Master of both worlds, have You ever seen anyone as diligent in doing Your work? And yet they

wish to count him among those consigned to [eternal] darkness! At that moment a heavenly voice came forth, saying to them, *He shall attend upon kings; he shall not attend upon those consigned to [eternal] darkness* (Prov. 22:29).

(Mid. Prov. 22:29)¹

The *Memra*, also, is spoken of in distinguishing terms such as 'loathing' (Trg. Ezek. 23:18), 'rejoicing' (Trg. Jer. 31:28), of being God's 'witness' (cf. Trg. Jer. 29:23; 42:5; Trg. Mal. 3:5), of being placed 'at your [Israel's] assistance to deliver' (Trg. Jer. 1:8, 19; 15:20; 20:11; 30:11; 42:11; 46:28), of being 'like a desolate wilderness' (Trg. Jer. 2:31), and who will be 'like a father for Israel' (Trg. Jer. 31:9). There is also a direct invocation to the *Memra*: 'Hear, O *Memra* of God, the voice of Judah's prayer, and be a stay and support to him from his enemies' (J. Trg. Dt. 33:7; cf. Abelson, 157). Instead of 'I shall require it [vengeance] from him', the Trg. Onk. Dt. 18:19 has 'My *Memra* will seek him out.' The *Memra* smites, (cf. Trg. Jon. 2 Sam. 6:7), is appointed by God (cf. Trg. Onk. Ex. 25:22), is sent by the Lord (cf. Trg. Jon. 1 Kgs. 18:24), and it is His *Memra* that repents (cf. Trg. Onk. Gen. 6:6; 8:21; Trg. Jon. 1 Sam. 15:11, 35).

Schechter admits that the *Shechinah* and the *Memra* were 'invested with a semi-independent existence' but reckons 'that the Rabbis hardly understood the real significance and the inevitable consequences of their use' (Schechter,

¹ The three kings mentioned there are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; the commoners are Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, and Gehazi. The unknown sages wished also to bar Solomon because of the cynical attitudes expressed in Ecclesiastes which were perhaps taken to be reflected in Solomon's behaviour (cf. Lev. R. 19:2 which outlines his sins). When Ecclesiastes was admitted to the scriptural canon, it became clear that Solomon had a place in the world to come (cf. M. Sanh. 10:2; Visotzky; 145 n^o9).

1909 39f.). However, when we consider the pervasiveness of a binitarian view of the Godhead in the various Judaisms it hardly seems to be the result of confusion. There does seem to have been a very early use of the doctrine of the *Shechinah* by Christians as evidenced by R. Eliezer,¹ who seemed aware of the tendency in rabbinic traditions towards a trinitarian view of the Godhead, when he gave the following word of warning, which Lapidé says became 'a basic hermeneutical rule in Judaism' (Lapidé & Moltmann, 36):

R. Eliezer said: He who translates a verse [from the Bible] literally is a liar. He who adds to it commits blasphemy. For instance, if he translated [Ex. 24:10], *And they saw the God of Israel*, he spoke an untruth; for the Holy One, blessed be He, sees, but is not seen. But if he translated, *And they saw the glory of the Shechinah of the God of Israel*, he commits blasphemy, for he makes three (a Trinity), namely, Glory, Shechinah, and God.

(Midrash ha-Gadol² on Ex. 24:10, cf. Schechter, 1909, 40 n.1; B. Suk. 5a; Kid. 49a)

The references of later Judaism to God's oneness in contrast to Christianity reflect more polemic than substance. Though Segal is sure that Christians were called "two powers" heretics by the late tannaim,³ he observes that the Mishnah does not identify the heretics with the term "two powers" and thinks it most likely that the term "two powers" heresy only became conventional at later date (Segal, 152). Also Segal reckons that though the

¹ It seems likely that the R. Eliezer referred to here is Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (sometimes called Eliezer the Great [cf. M. Sot. 9:15]) who dates from the end of the first and the beginning of the second century. He is usually mentioned without patronymic (cf. EJ 6:619; Danby, 306 n.7).

² Though the *Midrash Ha-Gadol* is an anonymous 13th century rabbinic work on the Pentateuch, it incorporates a multitude of ancient tannaitic Midrashim (cf. EJ 11:1515).

process of ostracism of Christians probably received its first impetus towards the end of the first century from Gamaliel II (in Jamnia) who expanded the curse against the enemies of the synagogue to include the *minim* in the liturgy (the *birkath ha-minim* [cf. B. Ber. 28b-29a]), the formula was only related to "two powers" at a later date (ibid. also cf. Horbury, 1982, 19ff.).

What we have in the early Judaisms is not two (or three Gods when we include the Holy Spirit), but the enigma of two (or three) different, distinct, non-interchangeable modes of divine being, of the one true God, of the one divine essence and substance. It would appear that functionally, Jews believed in some sort of binitarianism (and even trinitarianism) in the Godhead though probably still undeveloped as a doctrine and probably remained in such an embryonic state as a result of the problems which the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple and its cult brought. Interestingly, Gfrörer saw the *Shechinah*, *Memra* and *Yekara* as the origin of the Logos idea.¹ Concerning Philo's great contribution to the interpretation of the Heraclitean-Stoic Logos, Klausner says it is:

...an entirely Jewish conception: deity is absolute spirituality to such a degree that it cannot have any immediate contact with the world of matter; therefore there is a need of a mediating power, which is the radiation of deity and the individual hypostasis of one of its essential qualities. This Jewish concept, which was apparently anticipated by the "Maamar" and the "Shekhinah" of the Talmud and Midrash, provided a basis for the teaching of the Neoplatonists...

(Klausner, 1944, 187)

Of course, there is considerable ^{uncertainty} ~~uncertainty~~ regarding the dating of the

¹ Gfrörer, *Gesch. des Urchristentums*, 1:272-352 (cf. JE 11:259).

rabbinic texts regarding the *Memra* and *Shechinah*, but it does, at least, seem reasonable to conclude that the Judaisms were drawing on a common Jewish tradition. Philo's treatment of Ex. 25:22 ('I will speak to thee from above the mercy seat in the midst of the two Cherubim') would seem to support this conclusion. The Logos, not unlike the *Memra*, is associated with the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat: the two Cherubim are interpreted as symbolizing 'the creative and kingly powers', and the expressions "from above" and "in the midst" are taken to refer to the 'Divine Word, Who is high above all these...Himself the image of God, chiefest of all Beings intellectually perceived, placed nearest, with no intervening distance, to the Alone truly existent One' (Fug. 100f.; cf. Qu. in Ex. 2:68 with Trg. Onk. Ex. 25:22; 30:36). It is highly likely that it is in this common Jewish tradition that the author of Hebrews found his prime source of material for his concept of the Son's divinity. Significantly, Hughes and Stern see a *Shechinah* backdrop to Heb. 1:3a (cf. Hughes, 1977, 41f.; Stern, 295). Klausner is no doubt right to call Philo 'the complete and absolute monotheist' (Klausner, 1944, 187; cf. Philo, Decal. 65; cf. Spec. Leg. 1:12; Mos. 1:75; Qu in Gen. 4:8), but he was no more so than the author of Hebrews. Just as God's transcendence and immanence are not inconsistent and mutually exclusive so neither is monotheism and a binitarian (or Trinitarian) view of the Godhead. Lapse writes:

We [the Jews] know of no contradiction between the immanence and the transcendence of God...For the God who dwells in the highest heavens and was present in the holy place, as long as it stood...is for me not a divisible God...

(Lapse & Moltmann, 61f.)

So also there is no contradiction between the deity of Jesus (or the Trinity) and a strict monotheism, since He is the same indivisible God, who makes Himself known to His creatures in differentiated permanent, co-equal, co-eternal, non-interchangeable divine modes of being, namely, the transcendent Father, the immanent Son and the indwelling Holy Spirit. These modes of being are not to be confused with Modalism, the advocates of which being called 'Patripassians'; they viewed the Son and Holy Spirit as a temporary succession of modes or operations of the Father so that the Father was the Son and the Son was the Father and it was the Father that suffered as the Son (cf. Kelly, 120ff.). Hurtado says of Casey's hypothesis:

...in consistently posing the question as to whether Jews or Christians thought of any figure as a second deity fully distinguished from the God of Israel, he shows a disappointingly simplistic and wooden grasp of the complexities and possibilities of ancient Jewish and Christian beliefs.

(Hurtado, 1993, 351)

The fact is that in Judaism and Christianity there is a strict monotheism but not a strict transcendence of God. What the OT, the various Judaism and Christianity cannot manage with is a single mode of God's being. Concerning the incarnation of a pre-existent divine figure, the Targum on Isa. 9:6 comes very close:

**אמר נביא לבית דוד ארי ברי אתיליד לנא בר אתיהב לנא וקביל אוריתא עלוהי
למטרה ואתקרי שמיה מן קדם מפליא עצה אלהא גברא קים לעלמא משיחא דשלמא
יסגי עלנא ביומוהי :**

The prophet said to the house of David, For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and he shall receive the law upon him to keep it, and his name is called from eternity, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Continuing for ever, The Messiah; for peace shall be multiplied upon us in his days [Trg. Isa. 9:6].